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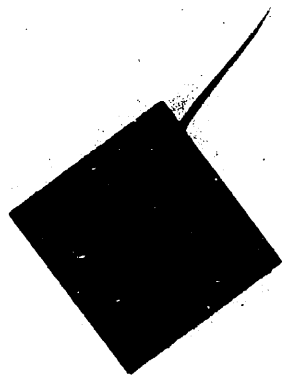
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1947



FILE No. 928

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UNTIL
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1947

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E 928

29 JAN

2

PALESTINE

Registry
Number

E 928/928/31.

FROM

No.

B.O.

Dated

Command.

Received
in Registry

29 Jan 1947

Palestine, Discussions with Jews

Palestine tel 91. of 13 Jan. Informing D. NAGNES
has asked whether it would be possible for his
group to be represented of the informal talk
which he assumes will take place with Jewish
representatives in London. If so, his group
wished to nominate him, and desired to
attend.

Last Paper.

no p.p.

(Minutes.)

References.

In P.P. B.O. tel 169 Jan 25.

(Print.)

In P.P. P'stine tel 217 31/1

H3 2/1

(How disposed of.)

H3 9/2

61873

(Action
completed.)

G.B.M. 31/1

(Index)

19/6/48

Next Paper.

1074

32003 F.O.P.

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INWARD TELEGRAM

E 928

29 JAN

AMENDED COPY (addition * underlined)

Cypher (O.T.P.)

FROM PALESTINE (O.A.G.)

TO S. OF S. COLONIES.

D. 13th January, 1947.

R. 13th " " 20.35 hra.

IMPORTANT

No. 91 Secret.

*Magnee has asked me whether it would be possible for his group to be represented at the informal talk which he assumes will take place with Jewish representatives in London. If so, his group wished to nominate him, or preferably both him and Senator, to attend.

2. I said that I would forward his enquiry but could not say what the answer might be.

Copy sent to:-

Foreign Office - Mr. C.W. Baxter.

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OUTWARD TELEGRAM

75872/147/15/47

Cypher (O.T.P.)

INDEXED

TO PALESTINE (General Sir A. Cunningham)

FROM S. OF S., COLONIES.

Sent 25th January, 1947. 22.00 hrs.

IMPORTANT
No. 169.

Your telegram No. 91.

seems clear that no representatives of the Jewish Agency will take part in the St. James's Palace Conference. There is at present no question of an informal conference with Jewish representatives generally, though I will of course be ready to consider any representations which individual Jewish organisations may wish to submit. As regards the Ichud and other similar organisations in Palestine, it would be convenient if any such representations could be submitted through you. On the other hand should Magnes himself decide to come to London I should welcome the opportunity of discussing with him his views on the problem.

~~CONFIDENTIAL - SECURITY INFORMATION~~
Distributed to: ~~ALL~~

Foreign Office

Mr. C. W. Baxter.

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INWARD TELEGRAM

928 / 928 / 71

Code

FROM PALESTINE (Gen. Sir A. Cunningham)

TO S. OF S., COLONIES.

D. 31st January, 1947.

R. 31st

19.45 hrs.

No. 217 Secret

Your telegram No. 180.

like to come to London to see you in accordance with your telegram No. 169. He has said that if you would give some indication as to when it would be suitable to you he would fit in with your wishes.

Copy sent to:-

Foreign Office - Communications Department.

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4 FEB

FROM

No.

Dated

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in Registry*

Registry
Number } E 1074/928/31

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Teuneph

conference

T. I. Zuta

29 Jan 1948
4 Feb -

Palestine Conference (Jewish)

Transmits notes of meeting with
delegation representing Jewish Agency
Held in Colonial Office on Jan 29

Last Paper.

928

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

E. Dept Camps.

Adman

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Bogdad.

В. М. К. О.

CAIRO

Tedda

W. J. J. J.

F.O.R.D.

Feb. 6

(Action completed)

(Index.

completed.)
GEM/10/1/2

12/19/84

Next Paper.

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32003 F.O.P.

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Sent via P.P.
Same as ref
Feb 6

E. Dept. Camps to
Dunbar's table

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SECRET

J. 1.

COPY NO. 26

Note of a meeting between United Kingdom representatives and
a delegation representing the Jewish Agency for Palestine held
in the Colonial Office on Wednesday, 29th January, 1947, at 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT: -

UNITED KINGDOM

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.
The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P.
Sir Norman Brook

E 1074

4 FEB

COLONIAL OFFICE

Sir Douglas Harris
Mr W.A.C. Mathieson

FOREIGN OFFICE

Sir Robert Howe
Mr H. Beeley
Mr J.P.E.C. Henniker Major

CABINET OFFICE

Mr E. A. Armstrong

JEWISH AGENCY

Mr David Ben Gurion
Mr Moshe Shertok
Mr A. Horowitz
Mr A.S. Eban

) Palestine

Mr Berl Locker
Professor Selig Brodetsky
Mr J. Linton

) Great Britain

Dr Nahum Goldman
Mr E. Neumann

) United States

Mr Rowson

Secretary

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He was much impressed by the necessity for finding peace and co-operation between the peoples in Palestine, and the repercussions of continued unsettlement were felt not only in the Middle East but throughout the whole world. The situation had now degenerated to a degree where the present state of affairs was no longer tolerable. No permanent settlement could be achieved unless regard was had to the depth of feeling of the various communities in Palestine, but the settlement must also satisfy the world conscience and be demonstrably workable and such that the greatest justice possible was done to the various interested parties. A long search for such a solution had been conducted by His Majesty's Government. The purpose of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry had been to find a basis for action which would secure general goodwill. Arising from that inquiry a scheme had been evolved which had been most carefully considered by His Majesty's Government and had been offered to the Jews and the Arabs. The Palestine Conference had been

called for the purpose of bringing the two communities together to examine this scheme and find a reasonable basis for a settlement. The scheme had apparently been rejected, although in many vital respects it had been misunderstood. It had, however, been rejected by the Arabs and His Majesty's Government understood that it was not to the liking of the Jews, although they had not had the advantage of discussing it with the Jews. The Conference with the Arabs had now been resumed and it was felt that some of the problems under discussion there should also be examined with the Jews. The present meeting was meant to be exploratory and to get both sides to face up to the possible difficulties in the various solutions put forward and attempt to find some common ground. His Majesty's Government brought no cut and dried scheme to the table. They might have views on the possible lines of advance, but they felt that the very essence of any solution was goodwill between the Jews, the Arabs and the Mandatory Power. They wished, therefore, to maintain an open mind and explore all suggestions without prejudice. The difficulties confronting various possible lines of settlement should be clearly understood. It would help a great deal if His Majesty's Government could ascertain the views of the Jews on a certain number of points.

(a) Was it so certain that the situation in Palestine had deteriorated to such a degree that co-operation between Jews and Arabs was impossible in some form of Unitary State? Must we rule out from the start the possibility of a bi-national or provincial autonomy scheme in a united Palestine?

(b) If so, was a divided Palestine the only possible solution which the Jewish Agency were prepared to support?

The idea of partition had been much talked about. It was a scheme which did not recommend itself to the Arabs; it had other inherent difficulties as well. It was not certain

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that it would secure the approval of the United Nations. If the point had been reached in Palestine where Jews and Arabs could no longer reconcile their interests in an undivided state, and there were basic difficulties to proposals like partition, what lines of advance did the Jews think possible? His Majesty's Government were prepared to consider any practicable scheme.

MR BEN GURION thanked the Secretary of State for his welcome. Some of the questions he had put to the Jews had already been considered by them although other aspects of them had not. By way of reply he would like to state very briefly the essential elements of any solution satisfactory to the Jews. They had a double purpose. First, to secure the national survival of the Jewish people in safety and, secondly, to re-establish Anglo-Jewish friendship on a secure and lasting foundation. Their requirements in Palestine were:

(a) to return the Jewish people to their country.
By this he meant not every Jew but as a start those 1,200,000 Jews in Europe and Asia who could no longer tolerate living in the countries where they now were. They wished to do this without disturbing the rights or position of the existing inhabitants.

(b) to re-build Palestine to the maximum extent.
Nine-tenths of the water of Palestine was unused and 70 per cent. of the cultivable area was uncultivated. Doubts had been expressed as to whether the Jews could so re-build Palestine. The answer was they had done it. Given freedom and opportunity they could make Palestine prosperous and a model country for the Middle East. They were working in the midst of vast territories where poverty, slavery, degradation and the exploitation of labour were rampant. They had established in Palestine a civilisation with much higher standards. By bringing back prosperity to the country they could do much for the advancement of the Middle East as a whole.

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(c) to gain national freedom and independence for the Jewish people.

The Jews in the world would never enjoy equality until they were given the same status as other peoples.

By the terms of the decisions of the Zionist Congress they had not been precluded from discussing with His Majesty's Government the establishment of a viable Jewish state in an adequate area of Palestine. If His Majesty's Government were prepared to propose a state which was really viable and an area which was really adequate, they would be prepared to recommend such a scheme to their people as a possible solution. At the same time he would wish to state with all sincerity and frankness that the Jewish people were deeply convinced that it was both practicable and just to establish the whole of Western Palestine as a Jewish state by free immigration and development. The Balfour Declaration had included all Palestine. Eastern Palestine had now been given away to the Arabs. In a Jewish state of Western Palestine the remaining Arabs could enjoy full national liberty. Such a state could exist and ought to exist. He realised that such a policy would require a great deal of consideration and would take some time.

Other matters, however, could not tolerate delay. He would like to state with the greatest emphasis that two great injustices, which had been perpetrated for the last eight years, must urgently be removed in the interests of Palestine, the Jewish people and Great Britain. The first was racial discrimination against the Jews in their own historic country by confining them to a pale of settlement in 5 per cent of that country by the Land Transfer Regulations. In any country Jews were surely entitled to equality before the law, but to suffer this inequality in their own historic home, promised to them by international law and by His Majesty's Government, was intolerable. Injustice done to a Jew was not for that reason less than injustice and it was much more so

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when it happened in Palestine and was caused by the British Government, the only Government who had really tried to do justice to the Jewish people. This must be stopped at once. It was making the country barren and sterile and endangered Jews throughout the world. It was most unfortunate that a British Government should set an example of racial discrimination against the Jews.

The second grave injustice had been the closing of the gates of Palestine to the Jewish people. In the disasters of the war they had lost twenty times as many people as Great Britain. A million Jewish babies had been exterminated; the last remnants of families of people in Palestine had been forced to remain in concentration camps in Europe. This was beyond their comprehension. A request for a minimum of 100,000 immigrants to Palestine had been made. This would not solve the problem but it would begin to remove the second great injustice. He would say without exaggeration that while there might be many claimants to Palestine there was only one people whose entire existence depended on being able to return to that country and build a home. There were great undeveloped territories on the continent of Asia where the Arab people could develop in peace. The Arabs who were children of Palestine had every right to remain there but the future of the Arab peoples and culture could not depend on Palestine. For the Jews that little country was the only one in which they could ensure the continuance of their race. One third of their people had been slaughtered for no other crime except that of being Jews. It was surely not difficult to carry out the promise made by 52 nations that the Jewish national home should be re-constructed in Palestine. Between the two wars a great constructive work had been carried out by the Jews with the assistance of Great Britain, and both parties could be proud of it. That work must be completed for the salvation of the Jews,

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the benefit of the Arabs and the whole Middle East. With the approval of the human conscience they could bring this dream to splendid fruition.

MR. CREECH JONES said that he had the profoundest sympathy with a great deal of what Mr. Ben Gurion had said. They must, however, consider the practical difficulties of applying such a comprehensive policy as had been suggested. He would like to revert to his question whether the solution envisaged by the Jews was on the assumption that Palestine must be a unitary state where the two communities lived together or whether that degree of co-operation was impossible. Were His Majesty's Government to understand that the Jews were pressing for the recognition of statehood for only one part of the community in a united Palestine?

MR BEN GURION said that, if by co-operation was meant social and economic co-operation, then this was possible as it already existed. If political co-operation was meant, then that was most unlikely. The crucial question was Jewish immigration. As a community the Arabs were opposed to Jewish immigration and he doubted the possibility of agreement with them on this issue. A decision, however, had been taken by international tribunal that the Jews had a right to return to Palestine. If this decision could be once and for all re-affirmed by the nations of the world then the Arabs would acquiesce in it. After the first world war the Emir Feisal and Dr. Weizman had signed an agreement which included a clause providing for large scale immigration into Palestine. All Arabs believed then that the question had once and for all been decided.

MR BEVIN asked at what rate they had then expected Jewish immigration to go on.

MR BEN GURION said that it had depended solely on the rate of development and the needs of the Jewish people.

MR BEVIN said 600,000 had reached Palestine.

MR BEN GURION said that during the same period a Jewish population of five millions had been built up in America from

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Europe.

MR CREECH JONES asked if, assuming some control of immigration was set up, the requisite political institutions of the country could be made to work by co-operation in local and central government.

MR BEN GURION said their experience was that co-operation on a local scale was possible where the crucial question of immigration was not at issue.

MR BEVIN said that His Majesty's Government were advised that if a viable Jewish state were established in Palestine then a viable Arab state could not be constructed from the remainder. The British Government could only establish a Jewish state in Palestine by altering the Mandate under the authority of the United Nations. He could not see the United Nations agreeing to carve up Palestine and make an non-viable Arab state or force the Arabs into another state. What were the alternatives? A provincial autonomy plan had great merits if the immigration and land problems could be surmounted.

The Arab plan placed the Jews in a permanent minority. Its advantage was that it led directly to independence and self-government, where a native central government was responsible for police and common services. Its provisions on immigration and land transfers were the main difficulties. These difficulties ought to be surmounted. It was clearly impossible to dump 100,000 Jews into Palestine in six months. If that demand had never been made, there might have been greater progress on the immigration question.

The Arab plan had been put up, His Majesty's Government's provincial autonomy plan had been put up, and now His Majesty's Government would like to see the Jewish plan. It was no good asking them to make an offer to the Jews. They must see what steps the Jews were prepared to take towards a solution and attempt to narrow down any difficulties in discussion. If immigration and

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land purchase could be settled was a unitary state possible? Could a scheme for immigration be worked out which would not create consternation amongst the Arabs? The Arabs had very real apprehension. What guarantee was there that the Jews would not use their great wealth to create a landless Arab proletariat? What order of economic development was suggested which would safeguard the rights of the existing inhabitants? He would not like to have to go to the United Nations and say that Great Britain had failed to solve the problem. The Jews must not expect His Majesty's Government to put a scheme to them in order that it might be used as a basis for bargaining.

What would be the relationship of a Jewish state with the Arab League? This affected the question from his point of view as the Minister responsible for foreign policy. He thought it a pity that both sides had brusquely rejected the

He had never known a time when the feelings of the ordinary people in the United Kingdom were so hostile to the Jews. The Jews were cutting their own throat. Naturally they would not accept a permanent minority position in Palestine, but the Arabs equally had a great fear of being swamped by Jewish immigration. Their other fear was that the Jews would not be satisfied with any settlement reached. They would try to expand from their bridgehead over the Arab world. He thought assurances of a definite character should be given on this issue. He had heard Mr Ben Gurion say that 1,200,000 Jews should enter Palestine. He did not believe Palestine could hold them, in spite of the development plans which he had studied.

Dr Weizmann had said 3 million Jews might enter Palestine. The Arabs had a genuine fear that this vast immigration was ultimately directed towards expansion into the Arab world.

The main barriers to a settlement were the questions of land, immigration and expansion. He was not convinced that

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purchase of land by individuals was the right way. It might be best to nationalise the land with a public authority giving security of tenure with rights of appeal on the part of land-owners and safeguards against exploitation of the peasants. On immigration, could it not begin in certain zones in the country. Some gradual development scheme might be worked out.

Partition was admirable in theory as a solution but it would still mean putting four or five hundred thousand Arabs under Jewish rule wherever the line was drawn.

The present was the last chance for a solution. His Majesty's Government had reached the end of their efforts. He now expected the Jews to put down a scheme without prejudice and let His Majesty's Government examine it. At the earlier meetings of the Conference the Arabs had come a long way to meet Great Britain and put down a scheme. Let the Jews now put down a scheme and not play their cards too high. The Balfour Declaration had been good for the Jews but in the field of foreign policy he regretted it as a disaster which had promised two peoples the same thing. Whatever had happened in the past the problem was one for the present Government to solve now.

MR BEN GURION said that he agreed with a great deal of what the Foreign Secretary had said. On the question of immigration His Majesty's Government naturally had access to a great deal of information both official and unofficial which the Jews had not. The Jews, however, were living in Palestine. They had seen the change from a primitive country to the position today; in one year in the past 70,000 Jews had been easily absorbed. Before the Jews came to Palestine it was a land of emigration. They were now talking about a new Palestine. The experience of the Jews had taught them that there should be no difficulty in developing Palestine to hold two or three times as many people as were there now. Their only desire was to bring

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in Jews to new factories and new fields for hard work. Their people were actually in the Negeb, where no single settlement had existed before. They were prepared to bring in one or two million Jews and make homes for them without displacing a single Arab.

MR BEVIN said he would like the Jews to prove that a viable State called Palestine could be set up with Arabs and Jews agreeing on development.

MR BEN GURION asked if he meant that the State would be made independent immediately and given power to decide on immigration policy by majority vote.

MR BEVIN said no. Immigration would be determined purely by the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

MR BEN GURION asked if that were possible of expectation in a State with a two-thirds Arab majority. The first law Arabs would make would be to prohibit immigration. The Jews were not prepared to submit the fate of Jewish immigration to Arab decision. If a unitary State were established on a democratic basis the majority decision would prohibit immigration. There was no way round this difficulty.

MR BEVIN said he envisaged a transitional period under the continuing, if diminishing, control of the Mandatory Power, when control over immigration would be exercised by the Central Government on a basis agreed by both communities. If this were not possible he could not believe that the United Nations would accept a division of Palestine leaving an nonviable State for the Arabs.

MR SHERTOK then suggested that all that the Arabs would lose would be the benefits they derived at present from the Jews and their State would be no less viable than Transjordan.

MR BEVIN pointed out that this would depend upon where the line was drawn.

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MR. LOCKER said that the Foreign Secretary had exhorted them not to put their demands too high and yet study the Arab Plan. In their plan the Arabs had not attempted to meet a single need of the Jews. Their plan involved the complete subjection of the Jews and could not be called a great constructive effort. The Jews were the only party who had made a constructive suggestion by saying that they were prepared to discuss partition. If they were to put up a plan in the same way as the Arabs had they would submit a brief memorandum asking for the establishment of all Palestine as a Jewish State. They said, however, that they were prepared to consider compromises. If they could have rights of immigration and settlement assured without partition, then they would like to know how. Immigration into Palestine had never been up to its economic absorptive capacity. There had always been a political high level restricting it. The only way in which immigration into Palestine up to its absorptive capacity could be assured was by the establishment of all Palestine as a Jewish State. If this was not possible then the Jews were prepared to discuss a viable partition. He asked why the Arabs of Palestine were suddenly claiming to be a separate national entity from Transjordan when history showed that they were a homogeneous people? The Arabs could not claim both national homogeneity throughout the Middle East and the right to separate national existence in Western Palestine. They could not have the advantages of Jewish immigration and, at the same time, the right to limit it. The Jews were prepared to create in Palestine an economy from which the Arabs would benefit and a State in which their essential rights were assured.

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DR GOLDMAN asked why the Foreign Secretary was so sure that the Partition Plan would be rejected by the United Nations. It was his duty to follow the proceedings of the United Nations closely, and he was convinced that if partition were recommended by Great Britain and supported by the United States (as it would be if the Plan were satisfactory to the Jews), the requisite two-thirds majority could be obtained. If of course the question were merely thrown into the lap of the United Nations without a positive recommendation, the result might be different.

He did not think it could be shown that the Arab State under a partition plan would not be viable. In any event, arrangements might be made to assist it in some way.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY enquired what sort of Partition he was being asked to consider. How large would the Jewish State be?

PROFESSOR BRODETSKY said that the Jewish proposal was for a democratic state with a Jewish majority. The Arabs, on the other hand, wanted a democratic state with an Arab majority. A constructive solution must be found somewhere between these two aims. The Arabs had not made any constructive proposal at all. The Jews had suggested partition, but they were not committed to it.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY made it clear that he was not trying to force the Jewish Agency to commit themselves. They could put forward proposals without prejudice to their right to withdraw them at a later stage.

He thought that a bi-national state with some degree of local autonomy might be a workable proposition, and he knew that there were many Jews who advocated

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this solution. He had not yet discovered exactly what it was that the advocates of partition were proposing. In any event, whether a bi-national solution or a solution along the lines of partition were found, there would have to be a period of transition.

MR. BEN GURION observed that the crucial question was immigration.

DR. NEUMANN said that the Arabs would not agree to any Jewish development whatever in a unitary state or in any other kind of state. It seemed that the British Government were working on the assumption that they could not do anything without Arab consent. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, for example, had made unanimous recommendations; the British Government had not accepted these because they could not be carried out against Arab opposition. The Mandate had not been carried out for the same reason. How could they assume that partition would offer a hopeful basis of discussion if Arab consent was to be required?

If his assumption that His Majesty's Government would do nothing against Arab opposition was not correct, he saw no reason why Jewish development could not continue in a unitary state.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY pointed out that Dr. Neumann had not told the full story of the reception given to the Anglo-American Committee's Report. When that Report was submitted, he had personally been ready to try to give effect to it. But the United States Government had not been prepared to commit itself to more than one of the ten recommendations.

Since that time, United States citizens, by giving financial and moral assistance to illegal immigration and to terrorism had made the situation more difficult.

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE also reminded the meeting of President Roosevelt's promises to the Arabs, which went further than anything which had been said by His Majesty's Government.

His Majesty's Government had given no promise that they would not act without Arab consent. They would of course like to have the consent of both peoples and indeed would like to see them both in the same room.

On the basis of the present talks, the Cabinet must decide whether they could put any policy into operation or whether they must surrender the Mandate.

MR. BEN GURION said that he and his friends would need time to prepare their answers to some of the questions which had been put to them. Two questions, however, he could answer now.

The first concerned the Arab fear that a Jewish State might pursue an expansionist policy. To this his answer was that, if the settlement was approved by the United Nations, then the Arab State would be as secure as any other state and could have no reasonable fear.

The second question concerned the relationship between the Jewish State and the Arab League. A Jewish State could not become a member of the League because the Jews were not Arabs, but they would be happy to co-operate with the League socially, economically and politically. If a settlement could be found which ensured Jewish immigration without political limitations, it did not much matter whether Palestine was a unitary State or not. (Mr. Ben Gurion, however, in speaking of the unitary state, seemed to have in mind a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine).

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THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that no solution was possible on the basis of a Jewish State in the whole country. Partition had not yet been put before the Arabs, because His Majesty's Government had not yet received any definite proposal. He would like to see their idea of partition so that he could judge the viability of the suggested Arab area.

He also asked them to make suggestions for a plan with more zonal autonomy than had been provided for in the plan for provincial autonomy.

MR BEN GURION said that a bi-national state was apparently to be defined as a unitary state with certain areas closed to the Jews. They could have nothing to do with proposals of that kind. So far as they were concerned, there were only two alternatives :-

- (1) A unitary state, with freedom for development in the whole area restricted only by economic considerations; or
- (2) Less territory with more sovereignty.

Answering a question by Mr Shertok, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that, under the proposals he had in mind, there would be no interference by the Central Government in the development of the Jewish area.

MR SHERTOK wanted to know whether under such a proposal there would be sufficient territorial contiguity of the Jewish districts, whether it would mean the crystallization of the Jewish national home in its present dimensions or whether there would be enough room for appreciable development.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY pointed out that partition would also involve a restriction of the area in which Jewish development could take place. He did not see

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what was their fundamental objection to a scheme of local autonomy which would equally give them full powers of development.

MR. BEN GURION asked whether in that event they would have power to retaliate against a Lebanese Government which boycotted their goods or an Egyptian Government which refused to grant visas to Jewish citizens of Palestine? Why should the same result not be achieved by the establishment of an independent Jewish State which could enter into agreement with its neighbours for common services.

PROFESSOR BRODETSKY wanted to be clear that what was being offered was in fact partition without sovereignty.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said that a time had come when it was essential to move in the direction of self-government in Palestine. This would mean the domination of Palestine by its Arab majority unless the country were partitioned or some means could be found of safeguarding the rights of the Jews without splitting the state.

MR. BEN GURION thought the Arabs would be afraid that under such a system the Jews would bring in large numbers of immigrants with a view to the later extension of their area. The Jews for their part would be afraid that restrictions would be placed on immigration, and that in the end a unitary state would emerge with an Arab majority.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY thought that the Arab fear of Jewish expansion would be equally strong after partition, to which MR. BEN GURION replied that under partition the frontier would be final.

DR GOLDMAN suggested that it should be guaranteed by His Majesty's Government.

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MR LOCKER pointed out that, under any system of provincial self-rule, the Jews would be citizens of a country to which they made a disproportionate fiscal contribution, while at the same time being excluded from rights of citizenship in certain parts of it. The Central Government would have to be given some powers. What guarantee would they have that the policy of this Central Government, e.g., in economic matters, would not hinder Jewish development? Would the Jewish area be able to get international loans?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY thought that these difficulties were not insurmountable. He would like to re-state the problem he was putting to the meeting. The Jewish representatives hesitated to propose partition. How then could they suggest that Jewish interests should be safeguarded in a unitary state?

Were they prepared to say that, if the pre-White Paper position could not be restored, there was no solution to the problem?

The present British administration was alien to the country and had no roots in the people. This state of affairs could no longer be tolerated and it followed that some central institution with which the population was associated must soon be established. This was the essence of the problem, as he saw it, and he could see only two solutions - partition or some kind of bi-national state.

MR BEN GURION asked whether His Majesty's Government ruled out absolutely the maintenance of the Mandate.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY thought it was clear that we could not carry on with the Mandate much longer. Something must be done to bring the people of Palestine

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into a position of responsibility.

MR BEN GURION remarked that this left only one solution.

MR SHERTOK said that if His Majesty's Government were prepared to consider the return to the status quo ante 1939, the Zionists would be prepared to withdraw their claim to statehood. But it seemed that this was impossible. If they were to be asked to accept less than the whole of Palestine, the compensation to which they would be entitled for the territory they sacrificed could only be in terms of sovereignty.

If they were not given a Jewish State they would have no seat in the United Nations, whereas the Arabs already had five.

They were being asked to offer a sacrifice. Once they put forward a frontier they would have written off parts of Palestine without any certainty that this concession would be adequately compensated. They were being asked to commit themselves.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY again assured them that any scheme they put forward would not be used against them in any future discussions.

Continuing, MR SHERTOK denied that the Jews created a landless Arab proletariat. They were prepared to give formal guarantees not to dispossess Arabs.

They wanted to know what was going to happen in the interval before a new policy was put into effect. They were constantly faced by commitments to the Arabs under which the British Government claimed that they were prevented from allowing an increase in Jewish immigration. The continuance of this position was intolerable. If the question were not taken to the

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United Nations until September, what was to happen in the interval?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he was not unmindful of that point. It might be possible for proposals to be made and considered.

He again asked whether they could not look at the alternative possibilities and put forward proposals which could form a basis for discussion.

MR. BEN GURLION said that they would present in writing their objections to the so-called Morrison Plan.

After the statement that a return to the pre-1939 position was impossible, there were not many alternatives open to them.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY pointed out that the Arabs regarded the White Paper as a binding commitment. We could not simply rescind it and put nothing in its place.

SIR NORMAN BROOK emphasised that we could not contemplate the continuance of a situation in which there was no practical hope of progress towards self-government.

DR NEUMANN asked whether the Foreign Secretary's suggestion would not involve continuing British Administration in Palestine.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY agreed, but pointed out that it would be British Administration with which the people were actively associated.

Answering a question by Professor Brodetsky, SIR FORMAN BROOK repeated that the suggestion put forward was for a Central Government in which the mandatory power would play a steadily diminishing part with complete independence as the final aim.

Colonial Office, S.W.1.

29TH JANUARY, 1947.

FO 371/61873

Sir R. Howe & Co.
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Note of a meeting between United Kingdom representatives
and a delegation representing the Jewish Agency for Palestine

SECRETARY OF
STATES FILE

NOT TO BE
ENTERED

Colonial Office: Wednesday, 29th January, 1947, at 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT

UNITED KINGDOM

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.
The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P.
Sir Norman Brook

COLONIAL OFFICE

Sir Douglas Harris
Mr J.M. Martin
Mr W.A.C. Mathieson

FOREIGN OFFICE

Sir Robert Howe
Mr G.W. Baxter
Mr H. Beeley
Mr J.D.E.C. Henniker

CABINET OFFICE

Mr E. A. Armstrong

JEWISH AGENCY

Mr David Ben Gurion
Mr Moshe Shertok
Mr A. Morowitz
Mr A.S. Eban

} Palestine

Mr Berl Locker
Professor Selig Brodetsky
Mr J. Linton

} Great Britain

Dr Nahum Goldman
Mr E. Neumann

} United States

Mr Rowson

} Secretary

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MR CREECH JONES opened the discussion by saying that it was customary for His Majesty's Government from time to time to consult the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Community on problems connected with Palestine. They felt the time was ripe for another consultation. He wished to welcome the Jewish Agency Delegation to a discussion on problems which had now become very grave indeed.

It was imperative that the difficulties long experienced in Palestine should now come to an end. His Majesty's Government recognised that they had a very considerable responsibility to find a way through these difficulties to a permanent solution, but if they were aware of their own responsibility they were also very conscious that no solution was possible without the wholehearted co-operation of the Jewish and Arab peoples. The responsibility was, therefore, also shared by them.

He was much impressed by the necessity for finding peace and co-operation between the peoples in Palestine as the repercussions of continued unsettlement were felt not only in the Middle East but throughout the whole world. The situation had now degenerated to a degree where the present state of affairs was no longer tolerable. No permanent settlement could be achieved unless regard was had to the depth of feeling of the various communities in Palestine but the settlement must also satisfy world conscience and be demonstrably workable and such that the greatest justice possible was done to the various interested parties. A long search for such a solution had been conducted by His Majesty's Government. The purpose of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry had been to find a basis for action which would secure general goodwill. Arising from that inquiry a scheme had been evolved which had been most carefully considered by His Majesty's Government and had been offered to the Jews and the Arabs. The Palestine Conference had been

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(b) Is a divided Palestine the only possible solution which the Jewish Agency were prepared to support?

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that it would secure the approval of the United Nations. If the point had been reached in Palestine where Jews and Arabs could no longer reconcile their interests in an undivided state, and there were basic difficulties to proposals like partition, what lines of advance did the Jews think possible. His Majesty's Government were prepared to consider any practicable scheme.

MR BEN GURION thanked the Secretary of State for his welcome. Some of the questions he had put to the Jews had already been considered by them although other aspects of them had not. By way of reply he would like to state very briefly the essential elements of any solution satisfactory to the Jews. They had a double purpose. First, to secure the national survival of the Jewish people in safety and, secondly, to re-establish Anglo-Jewish friendship on a secure and lasting foundation. What they wanted for Palestine was:

(a) to get back the Jewish people to their country.

By this he meant not every Jew but as a start those 1,200,000 Jews in Europe and Asia who could no longer tolerate living in the countries where they were now. They wished to do this without disturbing the position of those others who were already living in Palestine.

(b) to re-build Palestine to the maximum extent.

Nine-tenths of the water of Palestine was unused and 70 per cent. of the cultivable area was uncultivated. Doubts had been expressed as to whether the Jews could so re-build Palestine. The answer was they had done it. Given freedom and opportunity they could make Palestine prosperous and a model country for the Middle East. They were working in the midst of vast territories where poverty, slavery, degradation and the exploitation of labour were rampant. They had established in Palestine a civilisation with much higher standards. By bringing back prosperity to the country they could do much for the advancement of the Middle East as a whole.

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(c) to gain national freedom and independence for the Jewish people.

The Jews in the world would never enjoy equity until they were given the same status as other peoples.

By the terms of the Zionist Congress they had not been precluded from discussing with His Majesty's Government the establishment of a viable Jewish state in an adequate area of Palestine. If His Majesty's Government were prepared to propose a state which was really viable and an area which was really adequate they would be prepared to recommend such a scheme to their people as a possible solution. At the same time he would wish to state with all sincerity and frankness that the Jewish people were deeply convinced that it was both practicable and just to establish the whole of Western Palestine as a Jewish state by free immigration and development. The Balfour Declaration had included all Palestine. Eastern Palestine had now been given away. In the new Jewish state of Western Palestine the remaining Arabs could enjoy full national liberty. Such a state could exist and ought to exist. He realised that such a policy would require a great deal of consideration and would take some time.

He would like to state with the greatest emphasis that two great injustices which had been perpetrated for the last eight years must however urgently be removed in the interests of Palestine, the Jewish people and Great Britain. The first was racial discrimination against the Jews in their own historic country by confining them to a pale of settlement in 5 per cent. of that country by the Land Transfer Regulations. In any country Jews were surely entitled to equality before the law but to suffer this inequality in their own historic home, promised to them by international law and by His Majesty's Government, was intolerable. Injustice done to a Jew was not for that reason less than injustice and it was much more so

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when it happened in Palestine and was caused by the British Government, the only Government who had really tried to do justice to the Jewish people. This must be stopped at once. It was making the country barren and sterile and endangered Jews throughout the world. It was most unfortunate that a British Government should set an example of racial discrimination against the Jews.

The second grave injustice had been the closing of the gates of Palestine to the Jewish people. In the disasters of the war they had lost twenty times as many people as Great Britain. A million Jewish babies had been exterminated; the last remnants of families of people in Palestine had been forced to remain in concentration camps in Europe. This was beyond their comprehension. A request for a minimum of 100,000 immigrants to Palestine had been made. This would not have been enough to remove this second great injustice. He would say without exaggeration that while there may be many claimants to Palestine there was only one people whose entire existence depended on being able to return to that country and build a home. There were great undeveloped territories on the continent of Asia where the Arab people could develop in peace. The Arabs who were children of Palestine had every right to remain there but the future of the Arab peoples and culture could not depend on Palestine. For the Jews that little country was the only one in which they could ensure the continuance of their race. One-third of their people had been slaughtered for no other crime except that of being Jews. It was surely not difficult to carry out the promise made by 52 nations that the Jewish national home should be re-constructed in Palestine. Between the two wars a great constructive work had been carried out by the Jews with the assistance of Great Britain and both parties could be proud of it. That work must be completed for the salvation of the Jews

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and the benefit of the Arabs and the whole Middle East. With approval of human conscience they could bring this dream to splendid fruition.

MR CREECH JONES said that he had the profoundest sympathy with a great deal of what Mr Ben Gurion had said. They must consider the practical difficulties of applying such comprehensive policy as had been suggested. He would like to revert to his question whether the solution envisaged by the Jews was on the assumption that Palestine must be a unitary state where the two communities lived together or whether that degree of co-operation was impossible. Were His Majesty's Government to understand that the Jews were pressing for the recognition of statehood for only one part of the community in a united Palestine.

MR BEN GURION said that if by co-operation was meant social and economic co-operation then this was possible as it already existed. If political co-operation was meant then that was most unlikely. The crucial question was Jewish immigration. As a community the Arabs were opposed to Jewish immigration and he doubted the possibility of agreement with them on this issue. A decision, however, had been taken by international tribunal that the Jews had a right to return to Palestine. If this decision could be once and for all re-affirmed by the nations of the world then the Arabs would acquiesce in it. After the first world war the Emir Feisal and Dr Weizmann had signed an agreement which included a clause providing for large scale immigration into Palestine. All Arabs believed then that the question had once and for all been decided.

MR BEVIN asked at what rate they expected Jewish immigration to go on.

MR BEN GURION said it depended on the rate of development and the needs of the Jewish people.

MR BEVIN said 600,000 had reached Palestine.

MR BEN GURION said that during the same period a Jewish population of five millions had been built up in American from

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MR CREECH JONES asked if assuming some control of immigration was set up could the requisite political institutions of the country be made to work by co-operation in local and central government.

MR BEN GURION said their experience was that co-operation on a local scale was possible where the crucial question of immigration was not at issue.

MR BEVIN said that by the establishment of a viable Jewish state in Palestine His Majesty's Government were advised that a viable Arab state could not be constructed from the remainder. The British Government could only establish a Jewish state in Palestine by altering the Mandate under the authority of the United Nations. He could not see the United Nations agreeing to carve up Palestine and make an unviable Arab state or force the Arabs into any such alternative. A provincial autonomy plan had great merits if the immigration and land problems could be surmounted.

The Arab plan placed the Jews in a permanent minority. Its advantage was that it led directly to independence and self-government where a native central government was responsible for police and common services. Its provisions on immigration and land transfers were the main difficulties. These difficulties ought to be surmounted. It was clearly impossible to dump 400,000 Jews into Palestine in six months. If that demand had never been made we might have done better than we have on the immigration question.

The Arab plan had been put up, His Majesty's Government's provincial autonomy plan had been put up and now His Majesty's Government would like to see the Jewish plan. It was no good asking them to make an offer to the Jews. They must see what steps the Jews were prepared to take towards a solution and attempt to narrow down the difficulties. If immigration and

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MR. BEN GURION said that he agreed with a great deal with what the Foreign Secretary had said. On the question of immigration His Majesty's Government naturally had access to a great deal of information both official and unofficial which the Jews had not. The Jews, however, were living in Palestine. They had seen the change from a primitive country to the position today and in one year in the past 70,000 Jews had been easily absorbed. Before the Jews came to Palestine it was a land of emigration. They were now talking about a new Palestine. The experience of the Jews had taught them that there should be no difficulty in developing Palestine to hold two or three times as many people as were there now. Their only desire was to bring in Jews to new factories and new fields for hard work. Their people were actually in the Negeb, where no single settlement had existed before. They were prepared to bring in one or two million Jews and make homes for them without displacing a single Arab.

MR. BEVIN said he would like the Jews to prove that the viable State called Palestine could be set up with Arabs and Jews agreeing on development.

MR. BEN GURION asked if he meant that the State would be made independent immediately and asked them to decide on immigration policy itself.

MR. BEVIN said no. Immigration would be determined purely by the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

MR. BEN GURION asked if that were possible of expectation in a State with a two-thirds Arab majority. The first law Arabs would make would be to prohibit immigration. The Jews were not prepared to submit the fate of Jewish immigration to Arab decision. If a unitary State were established on democratic basis the majority decision would prohibit immigration. There was no way out.

/MR. BEVIN

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MR. BEVIN said he envisaged a transitional period under the continuing, if diminishing, control, of the Mandatory Power, when control over immigration would be exercised by the Central Government on a basis agreed by both communities. If this were not possible he could not believe that the United Nations would accept a division of Palestine leaving an unviable State for the Arabs.

MR. SHERTOK then ^{suggested} proposed that all that the Arabs would lose would be the benefits they derived at present from the Jews and their State would be no less viable than Transjordan.

MR. BEVIN pointed out that this would depend upon where the line was drawn.

MR. LOCKER said that the Foreign Secretary had ^{informed} ~~exalted~~ them not to put their demands too high and yet study the Arab Plan. In their plan the Arabs had not attempted to meet a single need of the Jews. Their plan involved the complete subjection of the Jews and could not be called a great constructive effort. The only party who ~~which~~ had made a constructive suggestion was the Jews who said they were prepared to discuss partition. If they were to put up a plan in the same way as the Arabs had they would submit a brief memorandum asking for the establishment of all Palestine as a Jewish State. They said, however, that they were prepared to consider compromises. If they could have rights of immigration and settlement assured without partition, then they would like to know how. Immigration into Palestine had never been up to its economic absorptive capacity. There had always been a political high level restricting it.

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The only way in which immigration into Palestine up to its absorptive capacity could be assured was by the establishment of all Palestine as a Jewish State. If this was not possible then the Jews were prepared to discuss a viable partition. He asked ~~what~~^{why} the Arabs of Palestine were suddenly claiming to be a separate national entity from Transjordan when history showed that they ^awere/homogeneous people? The Arabs could not claim both national homogeneity throughout the Middle East and the right to separate national existence in Western Palestine. They cannot have the advantages of Jewish immigration and, at the same time, the right to limit it. The Jews were prepared to create in Palestine an economy from which they would benefit and a State in which their essential rights were assured.

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DR. GOLDMAN asked why the Foreign Secretary was so sure that the Partition Plan would be rejected by the United Nations. It was his duty to follow the proceedings of the United Nations closely, and he was convinced that if Partition were recommended by Great Britain and supported by the United States (as it would be if the Plan were satisfactory to the Jews), the requisite two-thirds majority could be obtained. If of course the question were merely thrown into the lap of the United Nations without a positive recommendation, the result might be different.

He did not think it could be shown that the Arab State under a Partition Plan would not be viable. In any event, arrangements might be made to assist it

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY enquired what sort of Partition he was being asked to consider. How large would the Jewish State be?

PROFESSOR BRODETSKY said that the Jewish proposal was for a democratic State with a Jewish majority. The Arabs, on the other hand, wanted a democratic State with an Arab majority. A constructive solution must be found somewhere between these two aims. The Arabs had not made any constructive proposal at all. The Jews had suggested Partition, but they were not committed to it.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY made it clear that he was not trying to force the Jewish Agency to commit themselves. They could put forward proposals without prejudice to their right to withdraw them at a later stage.

He thought that a bi-national State with some degree of local autonomy might be a workable proposition, and he knew that there were many Jews who advocated this/

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this solution. He had not yet discovered exactly what it was that the advocates of Partition were proposing. In any event, whether a bi-national solution or a solution along the lines of Partition were found, there would have to be a period of transition.

MR. BEN CURTIS observed that the crucial question was immigration.

DR. NEUMANN said that the Arabs would not agree to any Jewish development whatever in a unitary State or in any other kind of State. It seemed that the British Government were working on the assumption that they could not do anything without Arab consent. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, for example, had made unanimous recommendations; the British Government had not accepted these because they could not be carried out against Arab opposition. The Mandate had not been carried out for the same reason. How could they assume that Partition would offer a hopeful basis of discussion if Arab consent was to be required?

If his assumption that H.N.G. would do nothing against Arab opposition was not correct, he saw no reason why Jewish development could not continue in a unitary State.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY pointed out that Dr. Neumann had not told the full story of the reception given to the Anglo-American Committee's Report. When that Report was submitted, he had personally been ready to try to give effect to it. But the United States Government had not been prepared to commit itself to more than one of the ten recommendations.

Since that time, United States citizens, by giving financial and moral assistance to illegal immigration and/

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and to terrorism had made the situation more difficult.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE also reminded the meeting of President Roosevelt's promises to the Arabs which went further than anything which had been said by His Majesty's Government.

H.M.G. had given no promise that they would not act without Arab consent. They would of course like to have the consent of both peoples and indeed would like to see them both in the same room.

On the basis of the present talks, the Cabinet must decide whether they could put any policy into operation or whether they must surrender the Mandate.

Mr. BEN GURION said that he and his friends would need time to prepare their answers to some of the questions which had been put to them. Two questions, however, he could answer now.

The first concerned the Arab fear that a Jewish State might pursue an expansionist policy. To this his answer was that, if the settlement was approved by the United Nations, then the Arab States would be as secure as any other States and could have no reasonable fear.

The second question concerned the relationship between the Jewish State and the Arab League. A Jewish State could not become a member of the League because the Jews were not Arabs, but they would be happy to co-operate with the League socially, economically and politically. If a settlement could be found which ensured Jewish immigration without political limitations, it did not much matter whether Palestine was a unitary State or not. (Mr. Ben Gurion, however, in speaking of the unitary State, seemed to have in mind a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine).

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THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that no solution was possible on the basis of a Jewish State in the whole country. Partition had not yet been put before the Arabs, because His Majesty's Government had not yet received any definite proposal. He would like to see their idea of Partition so that he could judge the viability of the suggested Arab area.

He also asked them to make suggestions for a plan with more local autonomy than had been provided for in the plan for provincial autonomy.

MR. BEN GURION said that a bi-national State was apparently to be defined as a unitary State with certain areas closed to the Jews. They could have nothing to do with proposals of that kind. So far as they were concerned, there were only two alternatives:-

- (1) A unitary State, with freedom for development in the whole area restricted only by economic considerations; or
- (2) Less territory with more sovereignty.

Answering a question by Mr. Shertok, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that, under the proposals he had in mind, there would be no interference by the Central Government in the development of the Jewish area.

MR. SHERTOK wanted to know whether under such a proposal there would be sufficient territorial contiguity of the Jewish districts, whether it would mean the crystallization of the Jewish National Home in its present dimensions or whether there would be ~~enough~~ room for appreciable development.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY pointed out that Partition would also involve a restriction of the area in which Jewish development could take place. He did not see what/

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what was their fundamental objection to a scheme of local autonomy which would equally give them full powers of development.

MR. BEN GURION asked whether in that event they would have power to retaliate against a Lebanese Government which boycotted their goods or an Egyptian Government which refused to grant visas to Jewish citizens of Palestine? Why should the same result not be achieved by the establishment of an independent Jewish State which could enter into agreement with its neighbours for common services.

PROFESSOR BENNETT wanted to be clear that what was being offered was in fact Partition without ~~autonomy~~ sovereignty.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said that a time had come when it was essential to move in the direction of self-government in Palestine. This would mean the domination of Palestine by its Arab majority unless the country were partitioned or some means could be found of safeguarding the rights of the Jews without splitting the State.

MR. BEN GURION thought the Arabs would be afraid that under such a system the Jews would bring in large numbers of immigrants with a view to the later extension of their area. The Jews for their part would be afraid that restrictions would be placed on immigration, and that in the end a unitary State would emerge with an Arab majority.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY thought that the Arab fear of Jewish expansion would be equally strong after Partition, to which MR. BEN GURION replied that under Partition the frontier would be final.

DR. GOLDMAN suggested that it should be guaranteed by H.M.G.

MR. LOCKER/

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MR. LOCKER pointed out that, under any system of provincial self-rule, the Jews would be citizens of a country to which they made a dis-proportionate fiscal contribution, while at the same time being excluded from rights of citizenship in certain parts of it.

The Central Government would have to be given some powers. What guarantees would they have that the policy of this Central Government, e.g. in economic matters, would not hinder Jewish development? Would the Jewish area be able to get international loans?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY thought that these difficulties were not insurmountable. He would like to re-state the problem he was putting to the meeting. The Jewish representatives hesitated to propose Partition. How then could they safeguard their interests should be safeguarded in a unitary State?

Were they prepared to say that, if the pre-White Paper position could not be restored, there was no solution to the problem?

The present British administration was alien to the country and had no roots in the people. This state of affairs could no longer be tolerated and it followed that some central institution with which the population was associated must soon be established. This was the essence of the problem, as he saw it, and he could see only two solutions - Partition or some kind of bi-national State.

MR. BEN GURION asked whether His Majesty's Government ruled out absolutely the maintenance of the Mandate.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY thought it was clear that we could not carry on with the Mandate much longer. Something must be done to bring the people of Palestine into/

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into a position of responsibility.

MR. BEN GURION remarked that this left only one solution.

MR. SHERTOK said that if His Majesty's Government were prepared to consider the return to the status quo ante 1939, the Zionists would be prepared to withdraw their claim to statehood. But it seemed that this was impossible. If they were to be asked to accept less than the whole of Palestine, the compensation to which they would be entitled for the territory they sacrificed could only be in terms of sovereignty.

If they were not given a Jewish State they would have no seat in the United Nations, whereas the Arabs already had five.

They were being asked to offer a sacrifice. Once they put forward a frontier they would have written off parts of Palestine without any certainty that this concession would be adequately compensated. They were being asked to commit themselves.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY again assured them that any scheme they put forward would not be used against them in any future discussions.

On Continuing, MR. SHERTOK denied that the Jews created a landless Arab proletariat. They were prepared to give formal guarantees not to dispossess Arabs.

They wanted to know what was going to happen in the interval before a new policy was put into effect. They were constantly faced by commitments to the Arabs under which the British Government claimed that they were prevented from allowing an increase in Jewish immigration. The continuance of this position was intolerable. If the question were taken to the

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United Nations until September, what was to happen in the interval?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he was not unmindful of that point. It might be possible for proposals to be made and considered.

He again asked whether they could not look at the alternative possibilities and put forward proposals which could form a basis for discussion.

MR. BEN GURION said that they would present in writing their objections to the so-called Morrison Plan.

After the statement that a return to the pre-1939 position was impossible, there were not many alternatives open to them.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY pointed out that the Arabs ~~had not~~ ^{had} made a binding commitment. We could not simply remind it and put nothing in its place.

SIR NORMAN BROOK emphasized that we could not contemplate the continuance of a situation in which there was no practical hope of progress towards self-government.

DR. NEWMAN asked whether the Foreign Secretary's suggestion would not involve continuing British Administration in Palestine.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY agreed, but pointed out that it would be British Administration with which the people were actively associated.

Answering a question by Professor Brodetsky, SIR NORMAN BROOK repeated that the suggestion put forward was for a Central Government in which the mandatory power would play a steadily diminishing part with complete independence as the final aim.

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J.2.

PALESTINE

Note by the Colonial Office

The following amendment should be made to the paper circulating a note of the meeting between United Kingdom representatives and a delegation representing the Jewish Agency for Palestine held

Heading:- Delete J.1. Insert J. 1st Meeting.

COLONIAL OFFICE, S.W.1.

4TH FEBRUARY, 1947.

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(or put with) 50TOP SECRETPALESTINEInterim Policy For Jewish Immigration

We understand that the Colonial Secretary is giving consideration to the ~~request~~ ^{request} of the Jewish Agency for an increase in the quota for Jewish immigration into Palestine during the ~~interval~~ ^{interval} between now and September. It is the opinion of the department that the arguments against any such increase heavily outweigh its possible advantages. These arguments are summarised below.

1. The minutes of the last meeting of the Anglo-Arab Conference at 1, Carlton Gardens record the Secretary of State as saying: "His Majesty's Government's attitude was that the ~~status quo~~ should be maintained during the period before the matter was submitted to the United Nations Organisation." To this Jamal Bey Hussein replied that the status quo should mean the White Paper, to which in his view the British Government were still bound. There should therefore be no Jewish immigration at all pending the submission of the Palestine problem to the United Nations. The Secretary of State is then recorded as saying: "His Majesty's Government felt that the continuance of a small immigration quota until the United Nations reached a decision would not upset the situation in Palestine very much, but what had been said in this connection would certainly be considered."

In the light of this record, it seems clear that the Arabs left London with the impression that the present quota of 1500 a month would be maintained, but that its reduction or suppression would at least be considered. They would regard a decision to increase it as a breach of faith.

2. The Arab delegates, although of course not satisfied with the results of the London Conference, were reasonably

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happy about the reference to the United Nations, and there is a good prospect that relations between the British and the Arab delegations at the General Assembly will be amicable. An increase in Jewish immigration during the interval might, however, create serious ill-feeling between them. This is a situation which we are most anxious to avoid.

3. An increase in Jewish immigration would have a provocative effect on the Arab population of Palestine, and might cause the Mufti's supporters to resort to violence.

4. Since we have publicly referred the Palestine problem to an international tribunal, it would be more correct for us to maintain the status quo until that tribunal has given judgment. Any change of policy in the interval would expose us to criticism; especially if, as a result of that change of policy, the debate in the General Assembly were to take place against a background of violence in Palestine.

5. A concession to the Jews on immigration at this time would be interpreted throughout the world as a concession to terrorism.

6. An immigration quota of 4,000 a month for two years ~~was~~ formed one element in the latest British plan. To give effect to this proposal in the absence of agreement upon the plan as a whole would be to do precisely what we refused to do when, after the Anglo-American Committee had reported, President Truman asked us to admit the 100,000 without waiting for agreement on the Committee's report as a whole.

7. The possibility must be faced that the General Assembly will not reach a decision by September and will ask us to maintain an interim administration in Palestine for a longer period. In that event, we should have established a new status quo with a higher level of immigration, and over a longer period this might have even more serious consequences.

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It may be suggested that an attempt should be made to obtain Arab acquiescence in a higher interim rate of Jewish immigration. But we know already that the Arabs would refuse. If we intend to abide by the results of our consultation with them, we might as well turn the proposal down at once; and if we ~~do~~ not intend to take account of Arab objections, it would be better not to consult them.

R. S. Howe

3rd March, 1947.

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Jewish Corp

J. 2nd mtg

3 Feb 1947

5 Feb 1947

Palestine Conference (Jewish)

Transmit notes of second meeting
held at Colonial Office 3 Feb 1947

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FOR THE USE OF UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVES ONLY NOT TO BE
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SECRET

J. 2nd Meeting

COPY NO. 35

Note of the second meeting between United Kingdom representatives
and a delegation representing the Jewish Agency for Palestine held in
the Colonial Office on Monday, 3rd February, 1947, at 3.0 p.m.

PRESENT:-

UNITED KINGDOM

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.
The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P.

COLONIAL OFFICE

Sir Thomas Lloyd
Sir Douglas Harris
Mr J.M. Martin
Mr Trafford Smith
Mr W.A.C. Mathieson

FOREIGN OFFICE

Mr C.W. Baxter
Mr H. Beeley
Mr Houston Boswall
Mr C.A. Gault
Mr J.P.E.C. Henniker Major

CABINET OFFICE

Mr E.A. Armstrong

JEWISH AGENCY

Mr David Ben Gurion
Mr Moshe Shertok
Mr A. Horowitz
Mr A.S. Eban
Mr I. Gruenbaum

Mr Berl Locker
Professor Selig Brodetsky
Mr J. Linton

Dr Nahum Goldman
Mr E. Neumann

Mr Rowson

Palestine

Great Britain

United States

Secretary

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MR CREECH JONES expressed regret that it had not been possible to give the Jewish representatives longer time to think over the proposals put before them at their last meeting, but His Majesty's Government were anxious to carry the discussion a stage further. He assured the Jewish representatives that they could speak at these meetings entirely without prejudice and they would not be committed if they were to express their views frankly. Some decision must be reached and the sooner it was reached the better. He had received that morning a note from the Jewish representatives setting out their views on the Morrison Plan, and this would be carefully examined.

Mr Creech Jones went on to say that he recognised that it was difficult for the Jewish representatives to put forward cut and dried proposals and His Majesty's Government did not expect them to do so at this stage. His Majesty's Government were anxious to find a scheme which would bring about the maximum goodwill between the communities in Palestine.

MR BEN GURION said that at the last meeting the Jewish representatives had been glad to hear that His Majesty's Government had an open mind on the Palestine question and had not committed themselves to any cut and dried scheme. He and his colleagues had explained in their note the reasons why the Jewish representatives could not regard the Morrison Plan as a basis for a solution. He assured the British representatives that the Morrison Plan had not been lightly rejected but only after much heart-searching.

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Mr Ben Gurion proceeded to say that the various suggestions put forward by the British representatives at their last meeting regarding zoning, cantonisation, and the bi-national state, had one common denominator; they visualised a unitary state. The Jews were more in favour of the principle of the unitary state than any other body of opinion. There was no question but that Palestine should remain a united country. The Jews never contemplated a situation in which Arabs would be expelled from Palestine, but the Jews could not contemplate a unitary state in which the Jewish community was confined to one part of it. It would surely be absurd if in the United Kingdom Welshmen were forbidden to settle outside of Wales and Scotsmen outside of Scotland, but that was what was being proposed in Palestine where the problem was even more complicated. Even under the Mandate immigration was limited only by economic and not by racial considerations. Under the suggestions put forward by the British representatives for a unitary state, the Jews could only make proposals regarding the rate of immigration and the final decision would remain with the central government or the High Commissioner.

The Balfour Declaration covered Palestine as a whole, both east and west. The Arab leaders of former days had recognised this and had expressed their sympathy and agreement with Jewish schemes of immigration and settlement. This had been illustrated in declarations by Emir Feisal and Jamil Mardan and also in the formal agreement reached between Dr. Weizmann and Emir Feisal in London in 1919 determining the relations between

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Jews and Arabs. Article IV of that agreement stated that all necessary measures were to be taken to encourage and stimulate the immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale. In 1922 Palestine had been divided by the separation of Transjordan. The Jews nevertheless believed that in the remainder of Palestine they would be allowed to develop the country without restriction and for a long time that was so. But in 1937 the Peel Commission proposed that the country should be partitioned. The Jews did not like that proposal but were ready to consider it. The proposal was withdrawn, but in 1939 measures were taken which in fact divided the country into three parts - 60 per cent. of the country was made into a prohibited zone in which the Jews were prohibited from settling and even from working. In 35 per cent. of the country they were only permitted to settle with the permission of the High Commissioner. Only 5 per cent. of the country was free to them. The reasons given for the prohibition of Jewish settlement in the 60 per cent., or Arab, zone, was that that zone was congested. He was familiar with the country and had travelled through it and was satisfied that congestion was not the real reason for the prohibition which had been made on purely racial grounds.

The Jews stood for the principle of unrestricted Jewish settlement throughout Palestine. 70 per cent. of the country was uncultivated. The Jews could cultivate the greater part of it and they could do so without taking away any land from the Arabs

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or disturbing them in any way. Jewish enterprise would bring wealth to the country. The Jews did not desire to discriminate against any one or to be discriminated against. They did not want to exclude the Arabs from any part of Palestine, even from parts in which they were not at present settled. The Jews approached the problem with an open mind, but they were convinced that they were entitled to settle in the entire country and that it would be for the benefit of all in the long term if they did so.

The Jews had rejected the Morrison Plan because it represented partition on a purely racial basis. The Jews felt that if under this plan they were excluded from any area of the country, it would be a final exclusion and in this belief they were strengthened by the example of Transjordan where a temporary exclusion of Jews had become a permanent exclusion.

The Jews were ready to consider a compromise, but it must be a compromise under which, if the Jews were excluded from one part of the country, they would have the assurance that in the other part they would be able to assume complete control of their own immigration, determine their own economic absorptive capacity and make treaties with other nations. They put forward these demands so that they should have the power to defend themselves, e.g., if an Arab country were to boycott Jews, the Jewish State would be in a position to retaliate. The Jews insisted on complete sovereignty in their own part of the country. They would never make proposals such as the Arabs had done whereby in a unitary state the citizens were divided into two classes,

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those who had full citizenship and those who had more restricted rights. The Jews believed in certain moral values and it would never enter their heads to discriminate against the citizens of any country under their control. The Jews would welcome an arrangement whereby a United Palestine remained under the control of the Mandatory power for a further period. They had never raised the question of the termination of the Mandate. As long as the Mandate remained the Jews should have rights to settle everywhere in Palestine.

But if the Mandate were to be terminated then in the opinion of the Jews the only real and final solution was that of a Jewish State in the whole of western Palestine. The essential elements of a Jewish State must be freedom of immigration, control of immigration, economic control and the right to be represented at the United Nations. The Jews were ready to discuss any suggestion conducing to this result.

MR. CREECH JONES asked if he were right in understanding that the Jews held it to be essential to buy land, settle and move about without restraint in a unitary state, the only limit being the absorptive capacity of that state, and that there would be no zones within the State.

MR. BEN GURION said that that would be so in a unitary state.

MR. CREECH JONES then asked if they meant a Jewish state in Palestine or that Palestine would be a Jewish state?

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MR. BEN GURION said that the limiting factor would be economic. Immigration would be allowed up to the limit of the country's economic absorptive capacity. That was not a principle, but a possibility. The present Jewish population of Palestine of 600,000 persons could be increased in a very short time.* In the first ten years after the 1918 war, the Jewish population had increased from 58,000 to about 125,000. In the five years from 1933 to 1938, the population had doubled to reach 250,000. There was no limit to the maximum absorptive capacity because that grew as the country was developed.

MR. CREECH JONES then pointed out that all reference to the machinery of government had been omitted from the Jewish proposals. He asked whether the Jews assumed that the Mandate would continue during the development period of which they had spoken. Did they expect that the administration would continue with no basis in the common people? In the eyes of the world we were obliged to establish a democratic form of government in Palestine. The facts were that in Palestine the Arabs were two and a half times as numerous as the Jews and that the Jews could not catch up. If therefore the Jews wanted a Jewish State how could they hope to obtain it on a population basis..

MR. BEN GURION said that, if the British envisaged the continuance of the Mandate for another five years, the Jews, by immigration and development, could double the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine in that time. As regards the establishment of democratic government in Palestine, a beginning of this was made in the recent war. Why could that not be continued now? Mixed Committees were set up for various purposes which worked very well and they could continue.

* Official figures of Jewish population: 1918 56,000, 1928 152,000, 1933 235,000, 1938 411,000.

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MR. CREECH JONES pointed out that these forms of representative government only functioned in the towns.

MR. BEN GURION went on to say that with questions of religious and personal status the principle of Mixed Committees could be developed as well as in other matters, such as the orange groves and labour, in which he thought that Jews and Arabs could co-operate. Immigration and colonisation were the crucial points of the Jewish programme and if the Arabs would agree to co-operate with the Jews, self-government could easily be attained.

MR. BEVIN pointed out that under the Jewish scheme the Arabs had no say at all. It was true perhaps to say that the United Kingdom was a unitary state, but in the United Kingdom the different communities, - English, Scots or Welsh - could move about and live as they pleased. Under the Jewish proposals ~~however~~ the Jews alone would decide on immigration and the economic capacity of the country and the Arabs would have no say. That was a form of aggression.

MR. BEN GURION then explained that it was for the mandatory government to determine immigration, not the Jews. It was for them to develop the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

MR. BEVIN agreed with this. He suggested that the solution was a unitary state. It was necessary for somebody to decide on the various points at issue. The Jews set themselves up as the sole judges, but no international body could accept this. Both sides must have equal consideration. The Jewish proposals amounted to driving the Arabs out, or subjecting them to discrimination, like that applied to the Red Indians in America.

MR. LOCKER disputed Mr. Bevin's contention that the Arabs would be driven out. The Arab population of Trans-Jordan had remained at the figure of 300,000 and the Arab population of Palestine had increased from 500,000 to about 1,000,000. He asked if the Jews were foreigners in Palestine or had they the right to return. Fifty two nations had agreed that they had the right to return, subject to the economic possibilities of the country.

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Palestine could not be compared with Great Britain or the U.S.A. The Jewish unitary State depended on the Jewish right of immigration, otherwise there would be no common ground for discussion. The Jews had the real interests of the population of Palestine at heart. Since the Balfour Declaration Jewish rights had gradually been whittled down. In the Faisal-Weizman agreement it had been agreed that Arab and Jewish commercial agents should be exchanged in the respective territories. By implication that gave the Jews special rights and if this was not recognised by the British, discussions could not be continued. Several British Commissions of Inquiry had declared that Arabs had not been displaced, and the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations also confirmed that the economic condition of the Arabs had greatly improved in areas where the Jews had settled, whereas where no Jews had settled there was no improvement. The Jews had created jobs and markets for the Arabs as well as for themselves. That was shown by the fact that the Arabs in Palestine were much better off economically than those in Trans-Jordan. A division of Palestine among Arab and Jew for purely political reasons could not be accepted. The Jewish problem, which was an economic one, must be solved on an economic basis. The fact that the U.S.A. did not permit the immigration of Jewish refugees had no connection with the problem of the Jews in Palestine.

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MR. BEVIN interjected that the United States had queered our pitch in Palestine. If it had not been for their interference we might have reached a solution to this problem much earlier on. He also asked whether the Jews considered the Palestine problem from a religious or a racial view point.

Several of the Jewish Delegates said that they considered they were a people and considered the Palestine problem from that angle.

MR. LOCKER then continued that the Jews wished to live as a people and had a right therefore to have some stake in Palestine. If this were not accepted, there would be no point in continuing the discussions. The Jews were willing to consider all compromises but without prejudice to their claim to rights in Palestine. They were ready to go to the extreme limit in meeting the British Government. They had three demands:-

- (a) That immigration should be only limited by the economic absorptive capacity of the country;
- (b) That they should be allowed to develop the economic capacity of the country, which was not a static thing. They could increase it if they were allowed a free hand.

At this point MR. BEVIN asked whether this economic development was expected to take place outside the boundaries of the unitary state or not.

MR. LOCKER replied that it would be confined within agreed boundaries, and would not take place in the Arab areas. The Jews were against any interference in areas not their own.

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MR. BEN GURION interjected that in the unitary State they would be able to take in all the Jews from Iraq.

MR LOCKER then said that the third Jewish demand was

(c) that they wanted to be masters of their own fate. They were tired of always waiting and hoping.

MR. BEVIN pointed out it would be difficult to ensure that all their economic prophecies came true.

MR. LOCKER replied that if they were allowed to have a free hand there was no question of their ability to succeed in this. He then reiterated the Jewish demand to be able to develop and to concentrate in their own area adding that there would be no discrimination in the Jewish areas.

MR. BEVIN then asked what was the area which the Jews had in mind?

MR. LOCKER replied that the Jews asserted their right to all Palestine, but if His Majesty's Government proposed a compromise, they would be prepared to discuss it.

MR. BEVIN then asked would they be prepared to accept it?

MR. BEN GURION said if the compromise were a viable one in their view, they would be prepared to accept it.

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MR LOCKER summed up his statement by saying that there were three basic requirements which must be assured for the Jewish people:

- (a) immigration;
- (b) development; and
- (c) sovereignty.

These requirements must be freely exercised by the Jewish people within their own area. The first step must be for His Majesty's Government to say what principles would be inherent in the settlement.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that such requirements went far beyond the Mandate.

MR LOCKER offered to give the Foreign Secretary the collection of documents from which Mr Ben Gurion had quoted to show that the Emir Feisal, on behalf of the Arab peoples, had conceded those requirements at the time of the formulation of the Mandate.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY asked if the Emir Feisal had not made acceptance of those requirements conditional on acceptance by the allied powers of the claims of the Arabs in other parts of the Middle East.

MR BEN GURION said that since that date all that the Emir Feisal had asked for the Arabs had been granted to them.

MR CREECH JONES said he wished to have the problem formulated quite clearly. There appeared to be two alternative ways of meeting the Jewish requirements. The first was a unitary state where the Jews had a degree of sovereignty in certain areas assuring their essential requirements. The second was a divided state where Jews and Arabs had

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complete sovereignty in their own areas. Was he to assume that the Jews would prefer a unitary state but would be prepared to accept a divided state if that were necessary to ensure their essential requirements. Would they be prepared to discuss a unitary state containing regions in which Jewish autonomy was fully recognised and in which Jewish immigration and development were completely unrestricted. This unitary state might have a central government under which the essential needs of Arabs and Jews would be reconciled and the fears of domination of one party by another would be eliminated. In such a state the Jews could never expect numerical parity with the Arabs owing to the greater fecundity of the latter community. In the case of deadlock in the central government either the High Commissioner or whatever representative was established by the United Nations or the Trusteeship Council would decide the point at issue. Assuming that such an organisation were established for a period and rights of secession were reserved for the two communities, was there any hope of a solution on unitary lines?

If such a solution was impossible, partition with adequate assurances of finality was the only way out. The Arabs were genuinely apprehensive regarding the expansionist ambitions of the Jews. The Jews might give assurances now that they would remain within any frontiers laid down, but the Arabs believed that after the economic absorptive capacity of the Jewish zone had been reached then a tightly packed and enterprising population would break out into the Arab world.

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Another difficulty was that a solution on the lines of partition would require international endorsement. Such endorsement would not be forthcoming unless the scheme satisfied the normal tests of development on democratic lines.

MR BEN GURION said that there were many unknown factors in the proposition put to him by Mr Creech Jones. Would immigration into a unitary state be restricted only by economic absorptive capacity and who would decide this capacity?

MR BEVIN suggested that a predetermined number of immigrants might be laid down for a certain period of years. After that further immigration could be decided by reference to an international authority or to a high Commissioner assisted by a Consultative Assembly.

MR BEN GURION said it was essential that the Jews should be given some idea of the numbers of immigrants to be admitted and the frontiers to be established before they could give their views on such a suggestion. Who would determine the number of immigrants and who would determine the frontiers? Freedom to purchase land was not sufficient without freedom to develop the area as a whole to make that land productive.

MR BEVIN said that he could see two possible lines of advance. The more obvious was partition and the more he looked at it the more difficult it seemed. The second possibility was the development of a unitary state, perhaps as an upward growth from municipal areas which were responsible for their own administration. These municipalities would be responsible for all

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aspects of government, including security, and they would be related to the central authority in exactly the same way as any large municipal area in the United Kingdom. Such a system could be established as preparatory to full independence as a unitary state. In the transitional period the High Commissioner, or central authority, under whatsoever name it might be constituted, could become progressively associated with an administrative council representing the people. Such a system, which ensured development on unitary lines, would avoid many of the troubles inherent in partition. Many people in the United Kingdom were in favour of Partition, but he suspected it was only as a counsel of despair. It appeared that a solution would have to be enforced on the Arabs. He wished to make it perfectly clear that His Majesty's Government would in no circumstances consider enforcing a solution on either party. If such a situation arose His Majesty's Government would withdraw from Palestine, whatever strategic or other sacrifices were involved. They would enter into no conflict with the local inhabitants on such an issue, nor would they contemplate a conflict with the United States of America. They would prefer to hand the question over to the international body announcing that they had failed to solve it. Great Britain had fought two wars for freedom but they would not fight a war to impose an alien government on any people. Hence their anxiety to preserve a unitary state in Palestine.

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He felt that both Jews and Arabs were in agreement that whatever solution were adopted some transitional period under the Mandatory power was inevitable. He thought that the main error of the past had been in trying to administer Palestine from above and meeting resistance from both communities. Such a system of government was impossible. An ordered administration must be built up from below, based on the willing co-operation of the peoples concerned. Such a structure of government meant a good deal of persuasion and a good deal of hard work. It was impossible in an atmosphere polluted by terrorism. In Palestine today there were certain areas which were clearly Jewish and certain areas clearly Arab. This was a fact with which any system of development must be reconciled. He wished to take account of this fact and find at the eleventh hour some settlement which would ensure the co-operation of both peoples.

MR. SHERTOK asked if he was right in understanding the Foreign Secretary to say that any solution His Majesty's Government were prepared to support must be one which secured both Arab and Jewish consent.

MR. BEVIN said that that was an over-literal understanding of what he had said and that there were clearly some points on which both Jews and Arabs would have to be persuaded to modify their views. The basic fact was that the British people would not tolerate much longer a situation in which British troops had to be used to maintain order in a country where a final settlement seemed as distant as ever.

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DR GOLDMAN asked if the idea being put before the meeting was for a unitary state based on parity of representation of the two communities in the central government, with allotted zones in which each community would have full control over immigration and development, and where any deadlock in the central government would be resolved by the Mandatory, with the right of secession secured for each community.

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MR BEN GURION said he had been deeply moved by what the Foreign Secretary had said as he felt he was expressing his genuine feelings. Great Britain had a choice to leave Palestine; the Jews had not. Their task in Palestine was to reclaim it not only for the Jews who were there today, or for those who wished to go to it today, but for the unborn generations of the Jewish people. They all needed Palestine. They wanted to create in Palestine something worthy of the generations of Jewish martyrs. They were trying to create there a civilisation which would have a beneficial effect throughout the Middle East and the world as a whole. At the moment Jews in

Palestine were murdering British soldiers. This caused as much suffering to the Jews as it did to the British people. The Jews had gone to Palestine certainly not to murder; they had gone there not only to help the Jewish people but also to create a nobler civilisation based on the dignity of labour. The Arab worker in Palestine had a much enhanced status compared with the Arab worker in neighbouring countries. This was due to Jewish example. The Jews had something to give to the Middle East; they could show the Arabs a better way of life; the duty of true statesmen would be to help the Jews to achieve this object.

MR BEVIN assured the Jewish representatives that he was not lacking in sympathy for their point of view. He was anxious to settle the problem. The trouble was, however, that if it was not settled in the Jewish way the Jews would regard the settlement as a failure. He reiterated his preference for a Palestine state in which Arabs and Jews could live and co-operate together. He felt that this state should be created from the bottom upwards and that this was the most businesslike basis for a settlement. He begged the Jews not to put their price too high and said that he could see indications of a movement on the side of the Arabs towards a less intransigent point of view. He would like to reach a position where there was the maximum measure of agreement between the two parties and the Mandatory was left with a minimum need to intervene.

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Mr Bevin said that he would arrange for the proposals, which had been put forward by the United Kingdom representatives that afternoon without prejudice, to be formulated in a document which would be communicated to the Jewish representatives, if possible, within the next twenty-four hours. The United Kingdom representatives hoped that the Jewish representatives would look at those proposals in an understanding frame of mind, realising that the problem required an urgent solution. The proposals should be treated as absolutely confidential. They had not yet been put to the Cabinet

Several Jewish representatives asked that in the formulation of the proposals, a number of points about which they were in doubt as a result of the afternoon's discussion should be cleared up. A point to which they attached particular importance was how the questions of immigration and land transfer would be dealt with during the interim period before any scheme was fully implemented.

The United Kingdom representatives said they would see that the statement of their proposals was as complete as possible.

In further discussion, the United Kingdom representative expressed the opinion that legally it would not be necessary to obtain the prior approval of the United Nations to any scheme under which Palestine achieved independence as a unitary state. Partition would, however, require the prior approval of the United Nations.

The meeting then adjourned until a date later in the week to be arranged subsequently.

Colonial Office, S.W.1.

3rd February, 1947.

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Jewish
Conference4. Oct 1946
5. Feb 1947

Palestine Conference (Jewish)

Document prepared by Jewish Agency
explaining reasons which led them to reject
the scheme for provincial autonomy in
Palestine as outlined in the House of Commons
by Lord President on 31 July 1946

Last Paper.

1088

References.

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Next Paper.

E1199

(Minutes.)

Division. I notice that this paper has not been
copied to Damascus. Please make sure that all
pp. in this series which are or have been sent to
other Arab posts go also to Damascus.

See marginal comments. But the paper
is of interest only as an indication of the
reaction likely to be given by the Jewish Agency
to the new British proposals.

H. Beeley 9/12

H.B. 19/12

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SECRET

Copy No. 27

J.1

PALESTINE

Note by the Colonial Office

The attached document prepared by the Jewish Agency for Palestine explaining the reasons which led them to reject the scheme for provincial autonomy in Palestine as outlined in the House of Commons by the Lord President of the Council on the 31st July, 1946, is circulated for information.

Colonial Office,
S.W.1.

4th October, 1947.

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A. MAIN OUTLINES OF THE MORRISON PLAN

At the end of July of this year, Mr Herbert Morrison, the Lord President of the Council, placed before Parliament a general survey of the provincial or federal plan for Palestine, based as he said on the recommendations of the Anglo-American Enquiry Committee and elaborated by Anglo-American experts. The plan provides that Western Palestine should be divided into four areas: a Jewish province, an Arab province, a District of Jerusalem and a District of the Negeb.

(i) The Negeb would consist of the uninhabited triangle of waste land in the south of Palestine beyond the present limits of cultivation.

(ii) The Jerusalem District would include Jerusalem, Bethlehem and their immediate environs.

(iii) The Jewish province would include the great bulk of the land on which Jews have already settled and a considerable area between and around the settlements.

(iv) The Arab province would comprise the whole of the rest of the country.

The district of the Negeb would be under the direct rule of the British, through the High Commissioner and his Council, who are referred to in the plan as "The Central Government". For the sake of accuracy, it should be mentioned that the official statement made by Mr Morrison provides that the Negeb District would be administered "for the time being" by the Central Government, but no mention is made of how long this provisional arrangement would last and what regime would replace it, if it were ever to come to an end. Nor is any reference made to the provisions which would govern Jewish immigration and settlement in the Negeb District during the transition period, nor what measures the Central Government would apply immediately in its administration of this area. All these points are left vague.

As far as the Jerusalem District is concerned, Mr Morrison announced that a Council would be appointed with powers similar to those of a municipal council. Most of its members would be elected, but a certain number would be appointed by the High Commissioner.

The boundaries between the Jewish and the Arab Provinces would have no significance as regards defence, Customs or communications - which means that marauding bands could freely cross from one Province to another. However, after the boundaries are fixed, they would not be susceptible of change except by agreement between the two Provinces.

The provincial governments would have power of legislation and administration within their areas with regard to a wide range of subjects of primarily provincial concern. In each province there would be established an elected Legislative Chamber, an Executive consisting of a Chief Minister and a Council of Ministers, appointed in each Province by the High Commissioner from among the members of the Legislative Chamber, after consultation with its leaders.

Bills passed by the Legislative Chambers would require the assent of the High Commissioner and the High Commissioner is empowered to withhold such consent from any Bill which in his view is inconsistent with the instrument of Government, whose provisions would afford safeguards for the peace of Palestine and the rights

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of minorities.

The Central Government, both in its legislative and administrative aspects, would be in the hands of the High Commissioner who would be assisted by an appointed Executive Council. Exclusive authority as to defence, the administration of law and order, foreign relations, Customs and Excise, the Police and the Courts, would be reserved to the Central Government which would in addition enjoy all powers not expressly granted to the provinces by the instrument of Government. The High Commissioner would also have reserved to him an Emergency Power to intervene in provincial affairs if, in his view, a Provincial Government failed to perform or exceeded its proper functions.

The High Commissioner would establish a Development Planning Board and a Tariff Board composed of representatives of the Central Government and of each Province.

The Government of the Arab Province would have the absolute right to prohibit all Jewish immigration into its Province. It would also have power to deprive Jews of the right to buy land in the Arab Province.

*This is
not
accurate.
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The control of Jewish immigration into the Jewish Province would be in the hands of the Central Government which would authorise a schedule of immigration on the basis of recommendations made by the Government of the Jewish Province, in accordance with the economic absorptive capacity of the Province. The Central Government would have no power to authorise immigration in excess of any limitations proposed by the Provincial Government, but it would have the right to reduce the quota proposed by the Jewish Provincial Government, if in its view the proposal exceeded the

If the plan as a whole were accepted and a decision taken to put it into effect, it would become possible to accept the recommendation of the Anglo-American Committee for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish immigrants to Palestine. These immigrants would be selected primarily from Germany, Austria and Italy and priority would be given to building craftsmen and agricultural workers, young children, the infirm and the aged. The bulk of the 100,000 would be drawn from the three countries mentioned. Any certificates available for Jews in other countries would be issued only to orphan children in Eastern and South Eastern Europe. The United States Government would be asked to undertake sole responsibility for the sea transportation of the Jewish refugees. They would have to provide the ships and defray the whole cost of sea transportation. They would also have to provide food for the immigrants, for the first two months after their arrival in Palestine. The Jews would have to assume the financial responsibility for everything else.

In the view of the Government and of its experts, the partition of Palestine into Provinces would entail a deficit in the budget of the Arab Province which would have to be met by a subvention from the Central Government - naturally from the income which the Central Government would derive from the Jewish Province. In addition, the plan proposes large-scale investments in the Arab Province with a view to raising its health service, educational facilities and conditions of agricultural productivity to the same level as that obtaining in the Jewish Province, and also with a view to promoting the development of light industries in the Arab Province. The means for these investments could not be raised by loan, and the experts suggest that the United States of America should make a substantial grant to the Government of Palestine to be used principally for financing Arab development

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projects not suitable for self-liquidating loans. In addition America is asked to authorise large-scale loans for the development of countries in the Middle East region, for in the opinion of the Government the development of Palestine will be bound up with the development of the Middle East as a whole. The development plan for Palestine would be implemented in conjunction with Transjordan and perhaps also with Syria and the Lebanon.

These are the general outlines of the plan as they were laid down by Mr Herbert Morrison in his statement to the British House of Commons.

B. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the plan, I would remark that the British Government, through Mr Morrison, has endeavoured to emphasise as strongly as possible the following two points: (a) that the plan is based on the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, and (b) that this plan is the one which was elaborated by the Anglo-American experts. These two points can with difficulty be reconciled with the truth.

The Morrison Plan is not based on the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, but is fundamentally opposed to them. The American Government has indeed withheld its agreement to the Plan, mainly because of the unanimous opposition to it of all the six American members of the Committee, headed by Judge Hutchison, on the grounds that it conflicts, on points of central and fundamental importance, with the recommendations of the Committee. Moreover, the two British members of the Committee who participated in the House of Commons' debate at the end of July, Mr Crossman and Major Manningham-Buller, strenuously opposed the Morrison Plan. The fact is that on the three fundamental issues which exist in Palestine - immigration, land and the Constitution - the plan is sharply opposed to the recommendations of the Committee. As far as immigration is concerned, the plan makes the immigration of 100,000 Jews unconditionally. Mr Morrison, however, makes the immigration of 100,000 Jews dependent on the acceptance of the new Plan as a whole. On the general issue of the Jewish right to immigration to Palestine, the attitude of the Anglo-American Committee was favourable, while that of the Morrison Plan is negative. In its sixth recommendation, the Anglo-American Committee expressly urged that Jewish immigration should be regulated in accordance with Article 6 of the Mandate for Palestine which requires the facilitation of Jewish immigration under suitable conditions. Moreover, both under the Mandate and the recommendation of the Enquiry Committee, the Jewish right to immigration applies to the whole of the country and not to a small restricted area alone, as proposed by the Morrison Plan. The Anglo-American Committee expressly emphasised that Jewish immigration was not dependent on Arab agreement, nor even on Arab acquiescence. The Committee stated that they reject the assumption that there should be no further immigration to Palestine without Arab acquiescence, for that assumption would entail Arab domination over the Jews.

No. Equal restrictions on just upon everybody other than Palestine Arabs. H.B.

The Committee also unanimously urged the annulment of the Land Ordinance of 1940 which involves racial discrimination against the Jews. It will be remembered that, when the Land Ordinance was debated in the British House of Commons in February 1940, the entire Labour Party voted against the Chamberlain Government on this issue, on the grounds that the Ordinance deprived the Jews of civic equality before the law in their own National Home. The Anglo-American Committee called for a land regime based "on a policy of freedom of sale, lease or use of land, irrespective of race, community or creed".

The Committee stated that it was opposed to any regulation or restriction which involved discrimination against either Jews

The Committee recommended that this should be done pending any reference to the United Nations. H.B.

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 or Arabs. It recognised the need for protecting the cultivator and the smallholder, but it did not believe, to use its own words, that the protection required by the Arab would be secured by restricting the Jews to particular areas of the country.

The Morrison Plan is based on the continuation of the Land Ordinance which deprives the Jews of equal rights, and it expressly states that the Government of the Arab Province would be entitled to withhold from Jews the right to buy land. Even those Jews who are already living in the Arab Province are not excluded from the scope of this restriction, and under the Morrison Plan there would be thousands of Jews and a few Jewish agricultural settlements in the Arab Province. The assurance of Mr Morrison that the instrument of government for Palestine would require the Provincial Governments to assure equality of civil rights before the law of all their inhabitants, would be correct only if we were to add the proviso which was well known to the Jews of Czarist Russia - "to every one except the Jews". For the Morrison Plan provides at the very outset that the Jews in the Arab Province, and perhaps also in the Negeb and the Jerusalem District, would be deprived of equality before the law and that their rights to live wherever they like, to buy or lease land or a house or a tree, would be restricted as they are today, by virtue of a Land Ordinance which was attacked in 1940 by the Labour Party as an instance of racial discrimination. Furthermore, the very essence of the plan, which is that it dissects the country into four zones, runs clearly counter to the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee. It is impossible for anyone who has studied both these sets of proposals, the recommendations of the Committee of Enquiry and the Morrison Plan, to agree to Mr Morrison's statement that the plan he put forward is based on the recommendations of the Committee. It may be doubted, moreover, whether the Morrison Plan represents that scheme which was elaborated by the Anglo-American experts. Incidentally, we have not yet heard any reason to indicate in what respect these gentlemen felt it necessary to ascribe this plan to the American "experts". We understand why Mr Morrison and his colleagues felt it necessary to ascribe this plan to the American "experts". By doing so they hoped to facilitate the approval of the American Government for this Plan. But we know that the Plan in its general outlines was suggested to the British Government a few years ago by one of the Arab statesmen of the Middle East and it is instructive to note the evidence of Mr Oliver Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Churchill Coalition Government, who in the debate in the House of Commons on July 31st, 1946, said: "The solution which the Rt. Hon. Gentleman (Mr Morrison) has read out to us now was in the Colonial Office last autumn", - namely the autumn of 1945, before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry commenced its work. In the course of the same debate, Mr Stanley interjected, during the course of a speech by Mr Davies, another critic of the Morrison Plan: "I said that this is no new scheme, and that there were papers on it in the Colonial Office last autumn".

However, it is not because of these contradictions that we reject this Plan and refuse even to regard it as a basis for negotiation between us and the Mandatory Government.

C. WHY WE REJECT THE PLAN

We oppose the Plan because it is merely a small modification of the White Paper of 1939, and the changes are not always even to the advantage of the Jews. We oppose the plan because it deprives the Jewish people of its rights in its homeland, as promised to it by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. We oppose it because it conflicts with the international obligations of Great Britain and all the promises of the Labour Party to the

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Wish people for nearly thirty years. We oppose it because it provides no solution at all either to the problem of the Jewish people or to the problem of Palestine, that two-fold problem which must be considered as an integrated whole. We oppose it because instead of bringing us peace, progress and development, as forecast by Mr Morrison in his speech, this plan will lead to the continuation and perpetuation - if not to the deterioration - of the three-fold conflict between the British, the Jews and the Arabs, and will certainly not contribute to the stability of the Middle East.

D. DETAILED CRITICISM

1. Immigration

Following the tradition of the White Paper of 1939, the Morrison Plan rejects the historic and legal rights of the Jewish people in Palestine as guaranteed by international law. It seeks to cut the historic bond between the Jewish people and its land. It prohibits Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, save for a small area which is called a Jewish Province. Outside this area, the plan deprives the Jewish people in the whole of Palestine - which is its homeland - of its rights which have been sanctified by history, nature and the law of nations - and it does that even in those large areas which are empty of population, in the south of Palestine and in the greater part of the Negeb, and in areas, too, which were revived and developed and made into a source of livelihood for hundreds of Jews and Arabs alike, only as a result of Jewish effort and Jewish capital and initiative. An instance of the latter is the Dead Sea area where the Plan prohibits further Jewish settlement.

I don't think we have ever used this argument.
1943

In one vital respect, the Morrison Plan is even more far-reaching than the White Paper. The White Paper provided that after a period of five years, when the Jews would have become a third of the population of the country, Jewish immigration would be able to continue only if the Arabs acquiesced in it. The term used was "acquiescence" - it was not required that the Arabs should agree. The difference between these two terms is clear. It is the British Government which decides whether the Arabs would or would not, do or do not, acquiesce: but it is the Arabs and only the Arabs who can decide whether they do or do not agree. In accordance with this clause of the White Paper, Jewish immigration has been continuing even after the 31st March, 1945, even though the Government has not annulled the White Paper and has left the Land Ordinance in force. The Morrison Plan, however, expressly provides that the Government of the Arab Province would be entitled to prohibit entirely all Jewish immigration and the High Commissioner - namely the Mandatory Government - would in no circumstances or conditions be entitled to permit any immigration into the Arab Province, if the Arab Government were against it, just as he would no longer have the right to permit Jews to buy land in this Province, for in that respect, too, the Government of the Arab Province would enjoy absolute powers. Incidentally, this is the only instance in the whole Plan of the Arab Province possessing an absolute power in the exercise of which the British Government would in no circumstances be able to intervene.

According to the Morrison Plan, Jewish immigration would be possible only in the Jewish Province, and the plan makes no mention of any right of Jews to immigrate to the Jerusalem District or to the Negeb District. Thus, Jewish immigration will be restricted in four ways:

(a) It will be restricted in area. Jews will be permitted to immigrate only to the small Jewish Province. Even Palestinian Jews would not be able to settle permanently in the Arab Province

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development of the economic life of the country as a whole. Economic absorptive capacity is itself a product of immigration and settlement, of government policy in the economic sphere, on foreign relations, on the size of immigration, and the planning and implementation of development schemes. Yet all these factors are to be left under the absolute control of the High Commissioner, and the Government of the Jewish Province is to exercise little or no influence on them at all. The Central Government will be able to hold up development plans and to impose on the entire country - and on the Jewish Province - its own policy of tariffs, development, industry, agriculture, transportation, commercial treaties, and fiscal policy in such a way as to undermine the economic absorptive capacity of the Jewish Province, so that even in this restricted area the Jews will be unable to determine the extent of Jewish immigration or to develop their Province on their own initiative in order to increase its economic absorptive capacity.

2. Land.

Let us turn now to the Land Ordinance which, apart from the deportation of Jewish refugees, constitutes the blackest chapter in the history of British policy in Palestine and perhaps in world affairs as a whole. It is an ordinance which confines the Jews within a Pale of Settlement, as in the days of the Russian Czar, or on the lines of the Nuremberg Laws. It is an ordinance which undermines the basic principle of Anglo-Saxon political civilisation; namely equality before the law. It is an ordinance which condemns more than two-thirds of the area of the country to desolation, and holds up the development and the progress of Palestine in the interests both of the Arabs and the Jews. It is an ordinance which endangers the civil status of Jews in all countries, in that this dangerous precedent, set up by one of the greatest powers in the world today, constitutes an excuse for all anti-Semites everywhere to deprive Jews of their rights. ~~It is an ordinance which is left in force by the Morrison Plan apart from the tiny area of the Jewish Province.~~ According to the Plan, the Government of the Arab Province is entitled to deprive even those Jews who are already settled in the Province of the right to acquire land, so that all the Jews living there - and it appears that their number under the proposed scheme will not be small - are doomed to have their position crystallized at its present level, in effect a sentence to perpetual economic and territorial imprisonment.

The most surprising aspect of the matter is that this prohibition will apply precisely to areas throughout the country which are desolate and uninhabited, such as the Jordan Valley, the Hills of Samaria and Judea, and the large waste lands of the Northern Negeb. Nor is it out of the question that this racial discrimination will be maintained in force even in the Jerusalem District and the Negeb District which come under absolute British control. It is difficult to imagine a greater and more pernicious crime than this Ordinance. It is a crime against nature, against history, against law and justice. It is a crime against the elementary principles of international political decency. The undertakings of the Balfour Declaration applied at the outset not to a tiny Jewish Province nor yet alone to Western Palestine, but to the whole of the country in its full historical and geographical boundaries, to the East and West of the Jordan. To whittle away these obligations to this point is the height of betrayal of that principle of fair play of which the British people is so justly proud.

These reasons alone would suffice to justify our absolute rejection of this Plan, not merely as a solution of the problem, but even as a basis for discussion and negotiation. And that is what the Executive at its full meeting in Paris decided to do.

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However, these are not the only defects of the Plan. Without attempting to exhaust our criticism, I would like to deal with some of the more important of those defects which I have not already mentioned.

3. Self-Government.

One of the supposed advantages of the plan, namely the autonomous Provincial Governments, is nothing more nor less than a deception. In practice, the control of the whole country, including the two Provinces, remains in the hands of the British officials headed by the High Commissioner. The only difference is that henceforward the officials will be released from the obligations of the Mandate. All Bills passed by the Provincial Legislative Chambers require the approval of the High Commissioner. The Provincial Executives are appointed by him from among members of the Legislative Chambers. All the vital matters affecting the country, including the two Provinces, such as defence, customs and excise, police, law and order, and all common interests affecting the whole country such as transportation, currency, roads, ports and other matters are from the very outset left exclusively in the hands of the High Commissioner. Even in those matters which are theoretically left within the sphere of competence of the Provinces, the High Commissioner is entitled to intervene if, in his view, the Provincial Government is not discharging its duties or is exceeding them. This system may perhaps be desirable when granting autonomous rights to primitive tribes in Central Africa or other countries, but it is difficult to suppose that the Jews will be content with such a camouflage or be taken in by it.

Special attention should be paid to two matters which are ~~excluded from the powers of the Provinces~~ vital questions of defence and economics.

Since 1919 up to the present day, the Mandatory Government has not shown by its actions that the Jews are able to rely on it for the defence of their lives, their honour and their property. Even the Peel Commission was constrained to point out that the Mandatory Government had failed to provide adequate protection to the Jews. The return of the Mufti and the anti-Jewish activities of the Arab League are not calculated to strengthen the security of the Jews in their country. The protection of the Mandatory Government has been of no avail to them. Indeed, the Jews have hitherto not relied on this protection and it is difficult to understand why they should do so in the future.

Of no less importance for the existence and future of the Jews in Palestine is the control of the economy of the country. Even during the period of the Mandatory regime, the Mandatory Government was not marked by any special desire to develop the country either in agriculture or industry. It displayed no economic initiative in the development of the country, the increase of its absorptive capacity or raising the economic standard of living of its inhabitants, Jews or Arabs. These tasks rested almost entirely on the Jews themselves. In what sense is the autonomy of the Jewish Province real, if these two most vital matters are left in the hands of a foreign and arbitrary officialdom, independent of the population, which in the best of cases will be indifferent, and for the rest will be positively hostile?

4. Jerusalem.

Reference should also be made to the regime proposed for the Jerusalem District. No one objects to the need for international

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supervision of the Christian Holy Places which exist in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, but the Morrison Plan is not designed to protect these Holy Places but to tear out from the Jewish homeland its very heart, the eternal Jewish city of Jerusalem which is the religious, national, political and scientific centre of the Jewish people. Moreover, the plan is calculated to deprive the Jewish majority of Jerusalem of its existing practical rights.

Almost throughout the period of its existence, the Mandatory Government has discriminated against the Jewish population of Jerusalem. For years a non-Jewish mayor was imposed on this predominantly Jewish city and subsequently a commission of British officials was placed in charge of municipal affairs, thereby depriving both the Jewish majority and the Arab minority of their municipal rights. This arbitrary policy is clothed in the Morrison Plan with constitutional forms. The municipal system determined by the Plan is such as to convert the Jews of Jerusalem by artificial means into a minority in two ways: in the first place by the addition of Bethlehem and the surrounding Arab villages, and secondly by the provision that some of the members of the Jerusalem Municipal Council shall be appointed by the High Commissioner.

5. Negeb.

The most surprising of the proposals is perhaps that for the establishment of a Negeb District under the control of the Central Government. Summarizing the importance of the Plan, Mr Herbert Morrison argued that it seeks to effect a fair and reasonable compromise between the claims of the Arabs and the claims of the Jews as far as possible. It is difficult to say that to deprive both the Jews and the Arabs of one-third of the area of the country and to hand it over to England is a compromise of that sort. For in the past, thousands of years Palestine has been the homeland of the Jewish people. During the past few centuries, the Arabs have begun to claim that Palestine is an Arab country, but we have never heard that England too has any claim to this country, or to any part of it, and it is difficult to explain in what respect it is either fair or reasonable for Great Britain itself to assume control, even if only - as we are told - temporarily, of one-third of the area of Western Palestine. This particular area, as well as the Northern part of the Negeb, with the exception of a small part of about 1,500,000 dunums - and even that cultivated only in a very primitive way - have never at any time been settled or cultivated by the Arabs, and they neither desire nor are capable of cultivating them. For centuries, these areas which constitute fully half of Western Palestine, have on the whole, with few exceptions, been deserted and barren. It is only in recent years that the Jews have attempted to establish agricultural settlements there. The Jews for their part have both the desire and the capacity to cultivate this empty region. To hand it over to the English is to steal away from the Jewish people - the only homeless and landless people in the world - a large part of the area which is completely open for immigration and settlement, and which is quite uninhabited; it is to condemn the Negeb to everlasting desolation and to deprive the Jewish settlements which have already been established there at the cost of so much labour and devotion, to isolation and stagnation.

6. Finances.

Let me mention one other characteristic detail. According to the Plan, the Arab Province will incur a budgetary deficit, even though both in population and area it will be larger than the Jewish Province. The Jewish Province will have to make this deficit good through its contributions to the Central Government. This indeed is the system which has obtained in Palestine throughout the period of the Mandate. The main burden of taxation has rested on the Jews who have provided at least 70 per cent. of the Government revenue, while most of the services

This was
not the
purpose
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supplied by Government, such as education and health, have been devoted to the Arabs. At a time when the whole of the country was open to the Jews, and when as a factor interested in settlement the Jews were concerned that the standard of living of their neighbours should rise, this system did have some shadow of justification. But it is neither fair nor reasonable to require the Jews to bear the burden of the deficit of an Arab Province which treats them as strangers and enemies, which permits them neither to buy land nor to immigrate, and which denies them equality of rights.

7. Increased Uncertainty.

The Morrison Plan leaves the future of Palestine shrouded in vagueness. It is indeed provided that the boundaries between the Jewish and Arab provinces are final and shall not be changed without mutual agreement, but the future of the country as a whole is not determined. According to Mr Morrison, "the Plan leaves the way open to peaceful advance and constitutional development either towards partition, or towards federal unity". This optimism on the part of Mr Morrison is not borne out by the Plan itself. On the contrary, the regime which it is proposed to establish is calculated to increase tension and conflict between the inhabitants of the country and the foreign government on the one hand, and between various sections of the population on the other.

The very fact that the political future of Palestine is left uncertain would increase tension, anxiety and conflict among the various factors. The Jews will fear, and not without grounds, that the Central Government which is already now artificially restricting the area of their settlement and the rate of their immigration, will condemn them to remain a permanent minority in the country, which will in the course of time come under an Arab Government. They will fear, too, that the time may come when Palestine will be joined on to a larger political entity outside the country, without consulting the Jews. One does not need much prophetic insight to understand that this is what the Arabs will demand, and the Jews will be filled with anxiety that in the future, too, the English will surrender to the Arab demands and go back on their previous promises to the Jews. It is not even out of the question that the miserable autonomy granted to the Jewish Province will one day be wiped out of existence. If the assumption is true that the Arabs are steeped in fear of Jewish domination, this Plan is not designed to remove that fear, but rather the reverse. The Arabs will be left with the fear that by growing in number in their own Province the Jews will become a majority of the country and that by a "Federal Union" the Arabs will come under Jewish domination.

At all events it is to be gravely feared that the Arabs will continue to undermine the limited extent of Jewish immigration and settlement permissible in the tiny Jewish Province, just as the partition of Transjordan in 1922 and the annulment in relation to it of the clauses of the Mandate dealing with the Jewish National Home did not reduce the opposition of the Arabs to Jewish immigration and settlement in Western Palestine. The very process which led to the White Paper of 1939 in which Great Britain defaulted on all its international promises and undertakings - "a cynical breach of faith", as Mr Herbert Morrison termed it at the time - can once again be repeated in the future in relation to the Jewish Province. Who can tell whether in time to come we shall not again be confronted by a new White Paper which, in a new act of "cynical breach of faith", will go back on the Morrison Plan.

These are the reasons which led us to reject this Plan even as a basis of negotiations.

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1947

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PALESTINE

E 1199

7 FEB

86

Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E 1199/928/31

U.K. Del

Jewish Com.

6 Feb 1947

7 Feb 1947

Palestine Conference (Jewish)

Transmits notes of 3rd meeting
between U.K. delegation and Jewish
Agency held on 6 Feb 1947

Last Paper.

1122

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

8 Dept Comps.

Amman

Beirut

Bagdad

B.M.K.O.

Bairo

Tedda.

W.Ton

F.O.R.O.

Feb. 17

Edinburgh to Damascus Feb 17

(Action
completed.)

(Index.)

8 Feb 10

14 Feb 48

Next Paper.

1230

(Minutes.)

Shd. be copied also to Damascus.

H.73. 8/2

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References

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SECRET

J. 3rd Meeting

E 1199

COPY NO. 27

1 FEB

Note of the third meeting between United Kingdom
representatives and a delegation representing the Jewish Agency
for Palestine held in the Colonial Office on Thursday, 6th
February, 1947, at 5.0 p.m.

PRESENT:-

UNITED KINGDOM

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.
The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P.
Sir Norman Brook

COLONIAL OFFICE

Sir Douglas Harris
Mr J.M. Martin
Mr Trafford Smith
Mr W.A.C. Mathieson

FOREIGN OFFICE

Mr H. Beeley
Mr C.A. Gault
Mr J.P.E.C. Henniker Major

CABINET OFFICE

Mr E.A. Armstrong

JEWISH AGENCY

Mr David Ben Gurion	}	Palestine
Mr Moshe Shertok		
Mr A. Horowitz		
Mr I. Gruenbaum		
Mr T. Kollek	}	Great Britain
Mr Berl Locker		
Professor Selig Brodetsky		
Mr J. Linton		
Mr A.S. Eban	}	United States
Dr Nahum Goldman		
Mr M. Neumann	}	Secretary
Mr Rowson		

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MR CREECH JONES said that he wished first to express the regrets of the British Delegation that they had been unable to fulfil their undertaking given at the previous meeting, when it had been suggested that they might circulate to the Jewish Delegation a paper embodying certain ideas as a basis for discussion. Considerable difficulties had been encountered in shaping these ideas but the British Delegation had, however, had another discussion with the Arabs at which some of those ideas had been further explored. The Government was at the moment trying to clarify the essential ingredients of a solution to the Palestine problem and they wished to be quite certain of the attitude adopted by the Jews on those points. The Jewish attitude on some of the issues had been stated in the paper they had submitted explaining their reasons for rejecting the Morrison Plan. He did not propose to discuss the Morrison Plan nor Jewish objections to it in detail. He would, however, like to hear their further views on certain questions of immigration and land settlement. So far the British Delegation had received no proposals of a concrete character from the Jews beyond the statement of certain principles which they wished to see embodied in any solution. He had hoped that they might have been able to submit for discussion a detailed plan of partition but in the absence of such detailed plan, he would like to ask a number of questions.

In their criticism of the provincial autonomy plan, the Jews had stated that one basic objection was that under such a plan they would not have complete control over immigration. They had suggested that immigration

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should be regulated by Article VI of the Mandate. Did the Jews insist on absolute freedom for the Jewish community in Palestine to decide the volume of immigration into Palestine, whether it was a unitary State or was divided in such a way that the Jews either had sovereignty under a partition scheme in part of the country or a substantial degree of autonomy in certain areas. Were they prepared to agree to the application of some general principle to future immigration or did they repudiate any external criterion whatsoever?

MR BEN GURION said that he appreciated the difficulties facing the Government and was ready to clarify the Jewish attitude on any points which required elucidation. If the country were to be administered as a whole under the Mandate, then he would have no objection to the application of the principle that Jewish immigration should be regulated by economic absorptive capacity. Immigration however, should be up to the full extent of such capacity. (Mr Ben Gurion did not say who would determine the economic absorptive capacity of the country.) If, however, Palestine were divided into two regions, and if in one part of the country the Arabs had complete freedom, including the right to prohibit Jewish immigration, then in the Jewish region the Jews should have absolute control over immigration. If, for the sake of argument, the Jews were prepared to acquiesce in some division of the country, it could only be on the understanding that in their part of the country they would be able to admit as many Jews as they wished.

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MR SHERTOK interposed that Jewish immigration had actually been the main reason for Arab development.

Mr. SWANSON added that in the Palestine Government's survey presented to the Anglo-American Committee there was a complete chapter on the effect of Jewish immigration on Arab development.

MR CREECH JONES said that in their objections to the land transfer regulations the Jews had made the point that discrimination was involved. He asked if under partition or in a Jewish autonomous area the Jews would seek to limit land transfer in such a way that transfer from Jew to Arab was impossible. In any such circumstances the minority would require protection. Would Arab purchase of land be restricted in any way?

MR BEN GURION replied that in any area over which the Jews had control there would be no discrimination. The only exception would be in the case of immigration, as the right of immigration

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conditions the struggle to secure for organised Jewish workers a share in the quarrying of stone for Haifa harbour.

MR CREECH JONES remarked that experience in other colonial territories had demonstrated that the establishment of minimum wage regulations tended to deny employment to the less efficient workers. He did not wish to enlarge on this point; the intention of his question had been to bring home to the Jews the genuine fear of the Arabs that Jewish immigration would lead to Arab unemployment. The Jews would be so anxious to absorb their immigrants that they would grant them employment at the expense of Arab workers already in Palestine, and the economy of the country would not expand rapidly enough to ensure that all labour, both indigenous and immigrant, would find employment.

MR BEN GURION said that he would challenge anyone to demonstrate that Jewish immigration had ever reduced the field for Arab employment. No single Jewish worker had ever taken the place of an Arab. The Jew did work which had never existed before but had been created by Jewish enterprise. He quoted the example of Tel Aviv, a new city, which employed a vast number of Jews and created periphery employment for hundreds of thousands of Arabs.

MR BEVIN said that the Arab fear was not the lack of urban employment. What he feared was that he would be pushed off the land and and Jews would take his place.

MR SHERTOK claimed that experience showed that Jewish immigration had by no means decreased Arab agricultural employment. On the contrary, it had given greater scope to the Arab agricultural worker.

MR BEVIN asked if it were not true that the Jews forbade the employment of any Arab on Jewish land.

MR SHERTOK admitted that this rule applied to communal settlements, but that was because those settlements did not wish to be employers of labour, either Jew or Arab, but did

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all their own work. To every Jew employed in Arab concerns there were at least 100 Arabs employed by Jewish enterprise. A certain number of skilled Jewish workers had been employed by Arabs in the citrus plantations but they were being rapidly replaced by Arabs. Jewish immigration led to the intensive cultivation of the soil and thus to greater Arab employment. In the coastal plain, where many new Jewish colonies had been established, the Arab population had grown. More Arabs were employed on less land, owing to the switch from extensive to intensive cultivation. The Jews had had to make special efforts in Palestine to foster the employment of Jewish labour, to prevent the Jewish community from becoming merely middlemen and employers. They had wished to maintain a properly balanced Jewish economy in order that the Arabs should not be reduced to a menial status within that economy, with consequent exacerbation of existing political differences.

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MR HOROWITZ stated that the conversion of land from the growing of cereals to intensive mixed farming increased the value of its produce fifteen times. The Arab agricultural economy had shifted from extensive arable farming to intensive irrigated cultivation. The produce of this cultivation was absorbed in the Jewish urban market. The fact that the Arab population had doubled without urbanisation demonstrated that the power of the land to support Arabs had also doubled. By all the normal economic criteria, e.g., birth rate, mortality rate, wage rate, etc., the economy of Palestine had expanded as a whole and the Arab economy had benefited accordingly. Statistics showed that immigration, far from creating unemployment, made the demand for labour greater than the supply. Immigration and employment graphs demonstrated that shortages of labour always coincided with the peak periods of immigration. With immigration came an influx of capital which increased employment possibilities. This gave them good reason to believe that with further immigration the economy would expand more quickly than the available labour force.

MR CREECH JONES said that it was possible for further immigrants to be absorbed because the Jews were able to call on ready capital, but it was not economically sound to pour capital into Palestine at an artificially high rate to support immigration. A period might come when less capital would be available while immigration went on unchecked. He asked what would happen then. The

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Arabs feared that the artificial movement of capital into Palestine to support immigration might eventually upset the economy of the country.

MR HOROWITZ said that the Hope-Simpson Report and the French Report both predicted that continued Jewish immigration into Palestine might lead to economically unsound results, but in the event these predictions were proved wrong. The development of a country depended on the interplay of capital, space and skill. Usually space and capital predominated. Palestine was a small country and therefore the Jews imported capital and skill. Originally the U.S.A. and Canada were in a similar adverse position and to meet it they called upon foreign money and incurred a foreign debt. The Jews had funds available so Palestine had no debt. Any colony must be developed by the import of capital and equipment and by the expenditure of skill.

MR BEN GURION said that the Jews did not think that the present intensive development of Palestine would go on for ever. Obviously a limit would one day have to be set. The Jews wanted to succeed in Palestine, however. That was the test of their survival as a race. If it were necessary to slow down immigration and development, this would be done but only for economic and not in any circumstances for political reasons. The Jews wanted a period of sound economy in Palestine. Many had said that their schemes would come to nothing, but the Jews had studied the question first and made sure that they were working along sound lines. The Jews alone could be judges of their own success in this. He foresaw

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personally that Palestine would eventually be able to support many millions.

MR. SHERTOK said that only 8 per cent. of the total area of Palestine was in Jewish hands and that 75 to 80 per cent. of the Jews were in the towns.

MR. BEN GURION said that the Jews could not get land. That was their difficulty.

MR. CREECH JONES asked how much of the available land in Palestine could be cultivated.

MR. BEN GURION said that there was no test except by trial on the ground. Most of what the Jews had already cultivated was originally barren.

MR. CREECH JONES said that the cultivable area in Palestine had been estimated at 15 million dunams. Of this, the Jews at present had 1,700,000 dunams.

MR. SHERTOK said that as a result of Jewish development in Palestine the Arabs had increased in prosperity and in population. They had come into Palestine from surrounding Arab countries.

MR. CREECH JONES asked what the Jews understood by the Negeb.

MR. BEN GURION said that the Negeb was an area of 12 million dunams south of Gaza and Rafa including broadly the Beersheba sub-district and a part of the Bethlehem sub-district. It had few Arabs in it, Beersheba being the only Arab settlement of any size. It was true that about 30,000 Bedouin lived there, some as winter migrants and some permanently, but it was largely uninhabited.

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MR SHERTOK explained that the area as conceived by the Jews was divided into two parts, a northern part of about 4 million dunams and the southern triangle of about 8 million dunams. The main Jewish interest was in the northern part; they had not completely disregarded the south, but they felt that its economic value was problematical. It had been proved that given irrigation the northern part could support a very large population under conditions of intensive agriculture. It was one of the most essential elements in Palestine from the Jewish point of view. Water had been found in two places in the neighbourhood of Gaza, where wells had been sunk. The water from these wells was being used by 12 Jewish settlements east, west and south of Beersheba. Some of this water was being made available for Arab tribes in that area for drinking purposes. Other irrigation plan had been projected whereby the flood waters of the Jordan would be brought to the Negeb from the region of Lake Huleh. Only two-thirds to three-quarters of the Negeb was cultivable. At present there was only enough water for existing settlements. Plans had been made for rain water conservation by means of dams and catchments, and subterranean sources existed in the neighbourhood of Beersheba.

MR CREECH JONES said that in view of their rapidly increasing population, the Arabs feared that Jewish immigration would restrict their economic resources and eventually oblige them to live in the poorer parts of the country

MR SHERTOK said that this point had been frequently made and frequently refuted. So far no such tendencies had been seen as a result of Jewish immigration and development. On the contrary, Jewish immigration

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any scheme of regionalisation in terms of which they would in practice be able to control in the Jewish region all matters to which they attached importance, provision being made for other matters to be dealt with by a central government so constituted that neither community could become the dominant one? If they were prepared to consider such a scheme how would they divide the task of administration as between the central government and the regions?

MR BEN GURION said that while it was true that the word "state" was not in the Mandate, the idea was there. The Mandate provided that the civil and religious rights of the inhabitants of Palestine should be safeguarded. If the ultimate aim had been to set up an Arab state surely there would have been no need to provide such safeguards. Was the meaning of the expression "national home" only that a number of Jews would be allowed to reside in Palestine? If that were so, how would Palestine differ in the eyes of the Jews from the United States, or the United Kingdom where Jews also were allowed to settle? Something quite different was intended. The reason why those who framed the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate had not referred in terms to a Jewish state was because, at that time, the Jewish element in Palestine was small, and it could not be foreseen how the idea of a national home would develop, but they undoubtedly believed that the Jewish national home should be allowed to develop into a Jewish state. There could be no national home under the Arab plan, which provided for the disqualification of Jews in certain respects. The Jews knew only too well how minorities were treated in other Arab countries. From the Jewish point of view a unitary state must imply that Jews were full citizens of the whole state and could settle anywhere in it that they wished.

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MR BEVIN asked whether the Jews suggested that His Majesty's Government should create a Jewish state?

MR BEN GURION replied that His Majesty's Government should carry out the Mandate. They were failing to do so. The White Paper policy whereby the Jews were condemned to remain a minority in the country, was still in force. The objects of the Jews were two-fold, to secure their future and to restore friendship between Jews and British.

MR BEVIN said that that friendship had not been destroyed by the British. He had told Mr Shertok some time before that if Jews killed British soldiers in Palestine they would create a great feeling against the Jews in the United Kingdom. It was a dreadful thing that Jews should be killing the British soldiers who had fought their battles for them against Germany. His Majesty's Government would not be responsible for forcing a solution on either Arabs or Jews.

Several Jewish representatives sought to rebut the suggestion that the Jewish Agency was in any way responsible for the activities of

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terrorists in Palestine which they attributed to certain elements in the Jewish youth who had been driven to desperation as a result of their sufferings during, and before, the war.

MR BEVIN went on to say that there was nothing in the Mandate providing for the unlimited immigration of Jews into Palestine and thereby enabling them eventually to dominate the Arabs. His Majesty's Government had tried to reach an understanding between the two communities but they were still at loggerheads. The Jews had never submitted any scheme of partition to His Majesty's Government. The British people would never consent to the creation of a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine at the expense of the Arabs.

MR CREECH JONES said that the Jews had taken exception to the provisions of the White Paper concerning immigration, land settlement and constitutional development. If the problems of immigration and land settlement could be solved in a way which substantially met the Jewish point of view, and if the country could be developed constitutionally in a way which would ensure that there was a reasonable prospect of the emergence of democratic institutions and that the possibility of Arab domination was eliminated, would the Jews be prepared to consider a plan based on those principles?

The Jewish Representatives said that if such a plan were put forward covering the whole of Palestine, they would be prepared to consider it.

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MR BEVIN said that he wished to be quite frank with the Jewish Delegation. He had approached this problem with a fresh mind and had examined it as impartially as possible. He had come to the conclusion that it was impossible to set up a continuous frontier in a partitioned Palestine without including at least 300,000 Arabs within the Jewish area. This would create an impossible situation which the Arab States would never accept.

Several Jewish Delegates interjected that the Arab States would never accept any compromise.

MR BEVIN said that Arab opposition would not necessarily be the deciding factor.

MR BEN GURION asked what misfortune it could be for 300,000 Arabs to live on terms of perfect equality with their neighbours in a State which was not an Arab State. The Arab peoples had 40 millions living in complete independence.

MR CREECH JONES asked the Jewish Delegates to realise that the Arab attitude to this question was not coldly rational but a product of emotion. The fact was that many Arabs in their present state of mind would never acquiesce in such a situation. The British Delegation were endeavouring to work out some sort of solution which would reconcile the fundamental requirements of both parties.

DR GOLDMAN said that Mr Creech Jones appeared to be contemplating a unitary state under conditions which removed the basic objections felt by the Jews to the White Paper. If in such a state the Jewish areas were satisfactory to Zionists and they had freedom of immigration into those areas, then the

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Arab fear of domination by a majority would be much greater than if a partition solution were applied which fixed the frontiers of Jewish expansion. The Jews would never accept a unitary state unless they had free immigration into their own areas.

MR BEN GURION said that although there might be many practical difficulties in the solution the Jews required, surely the question of abstract justice must be taken into account. It was to assure justice for the Jewish people that 52 nations had approved the Mandate. He did not expect a perfectly just solution in an imperfect world, but felt that he was entitled to ask for one that was more or less just.

MR BEVIN asked where the frontiers would be drawn in the Jewish plan for partition.

DR GOLDMAN said that they had discussed those frontiers amongst themselves but were not prepared to put them forward without more adequate assurances than the British representatives seemed to be prepared to give them.

MR CREECH JONES said that the Government was giving most serious consideration to a just and practicable way of handling the problem. He hoped very shortly to be able to put before the Jewish Delegation proposals in concrete terms. He asked them to approach those proposals in the same spirit as His Majesty's Government had framed them. He did not suggest that they should abandon all their preconceived notions but that they should at least regard the proposals as an honest endeavour to meet the Jews on those points to which they

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attached fundamental importance.

MR BEVIN added that after considering the proposals the Jews would be welcome to put counter proposals. His Majesty's Government had put up a plan before, and the Jews had merely rejected it. This unconstructive attitude would not help to solve the problem.

MR BEN GURION said that the Jewish Delegation would most certainly give serious consideration to any proposals put before them.

MR SHERTOK said he wished to make some final remarks about the attitude of the Arab States. Did Mr Bevin imagine that any of the Arab States would go to war with Great Britain in Palestine if a solution were imposed with which they did not agree. If the Jewish State were established in Palestine the surrounding States would grow to accept it as a fact in the situation. The commercial and economic interests of the adjacent States would very soon lead them to co-operation with the Jews, so long as the Jewish State had full national status and could bargain as an equal. It would certainly be no threat to the surrounding Arab world.

In answer to a question by Mr Creech Jones, MR SHERTOK agreed that what he had just said referred to partition but claimed that it would equally apply to the creation of a Jewish State in the whole of

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Western Palestine. He would like the British Delegation to understand the magnitude of the sacrifice which the Jews were prepared to make in offering to accept a reasonable partition.

MR CREECH JONES closed the meeting by saying that the Jewish Delegation would shortly be receiving His Majesty's Government's proposals.

The meeting then adjourned.

Colonial Office, S.W.1.

6th February, 1947.

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References					
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E 1230

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PALESTINE

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Registry
Number

E 1230/428/31

FROM

U K Del

No.

Jewish Conference

Dated

J. 3.

Received
in Registry7 Feb 1947
10 Feb 1947Palestine Conference (Hebrew)

Internal memo circulated to Arab
Delegation, was also circulated to
Jewish Delegation under note
enclosed. P.C. (A) (P) 5.

Last Paper.

1199

(Minutes.)

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

C. Dept. Comp.

Amman

Beirut

Bagdad

B. N. K. U

Cairo Feb 11

Tel Aviv

W. L. L.

Y. O. R. D.

C. Dept. Comp. to Damascus Feb 12

(Action
completed.)

P. M. 11/2

(Index.)

P. M. 11/2

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1324

32003 F.O.P.

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CONFIDENTIAL

J.3.

E 1230

COPY NO. 27

PALESTINE

Note by the Colonial Office

The Memorandum circulated to the Arab Delegation as F.C.(A)(P) 5. was also circulated to the Jewish Delegation under cover of the following letter:-

SECRET

COLONIAL OFFICE, S.W.1.

7th February, 1947.

Dear Mr Linton,

The Secretary of State desires me to send to you, to be laid before the Executive of the Jewish Agency, the enclosed copies of a memorandum outlining proposals for the future government of Palestine.

This memorandum is put forward as a basis for further negotiation.

The Colonial Office is ready to meet the representatives of the Jewish Agency at their earliest convenience to discuss the proposals outlined in this memorandum.

These proposals are being communicated simultaneously to the Arab Delegations now in London.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) E.R. EDMONDS

THE SECRETARY,
JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE,
77 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.

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PALESTINE

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12 FEB

108

Registry
Number

E1324/928/31

FROM

J. Martin

No.

Colonial

Dated

to M. Bealey

Received
in Registry

1 Feb 1947

12 Feb 1947

Palatine Conference.

*Enclosed copy of minute addressed to
J. P. Linton by M. Martin also copies
of letter and draft referred to in it
re the frontier to be adopted in the event of
Palestine being divided into provinces
for administrative purposes.*

Last Paper.

1230

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Minutes.)

J. P. Linton to J. Martin Jan 11

M. Bealey minute to J. P. Feb 3

HPB. 19/2

(Action
completed.)

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(Index)

19/1/48

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Immediate.

1st February, 1947.

My dear Harold,

I attach copies of a minute I have addressed to my Secretary of State and of the letter and draft referred to in it. You may wish to brief Mr. Bevin on the point, since it seems likely that there will be a meeting with the Zionist representatives.

12
J. M. H. H.

E 1324

H. Beeley, Esq., C.B.E.

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Secretary of State.

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Sir D. Harris has suggested that I might reply as in the attached draft to the letter from the Jewish Agency below. As, however, a meeting with the Zionist representatives has now been fixed for Monday at 3 p.m. it might be better if, if you agree, you gave the reply orally then, since in any case the Jewish delegates are likely to raise the point.

Apart from the question whether it is desirable to reveal the tentative scheme, the map and the full report could not be handed to the Jews unless (a) ~~it~~^{they} ~~was~~^{were} also handed to the Arabs and (b) the United States Government had first been informed.

(Sd) J. M. MARTIN

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THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE

77 Great Russell Street,
W.C.1.

January 31st, 1947.

J.M. Martin, Esq.,
Colonial Office,
Downing Street, S.W.1.

Dear Martin,

As I mentioned on the telephone this morning, we have received from Mr. Creech-Jones' Private Secretary, two documents: "The Constitutional Proposals put forward by the Arab Delegations" and "Extract from Hansard, 31st July, 1946."

AS regards the extract from Hansard, you will remember that we mentioned at the meeting last Wednesday, that this was the only document which we had on the subject of the 'Morrison' plan. We expected to receive the maps giving the frontiers of the proposed provinces. We should be grateful if such maps could be sent to us together, if possible, with a copy of the report on which, we understand, the statement of Mr. Herbert Morrison was based. Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

(SGD.) J. Linton.

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The Secretary of State.

The so-called Morrison Plan, as it was announced in the House of Commons and presented to the Arabs at the first part of the Palestine Conference, has been sent to the Jewish Agency. They have since written to the Colonial Office asking for a copy of the full Report of the official Delegations, led by Mr. Grady and Sir Norman Brook, together with the attached map. Neither this Report, nor the map attached to it, was given to the Arabs.

The Colonial Office have replied to the effect that His Majesty's Government have reached no decision on the frontier to be adopted if Palestine is divided into provinces. It is true that the British and point, but their Report ceased to be applicable when the Government of the United States declined to endorse it. The speech made by the Lord President in the House of Commons on July 31 is therefore the authoritative text of the proposals made by His Majesty's Government.

Land complete

H Berley.

3rd February, 1947.

Returned from Private Secretary Feb. 5
LMJ

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PALESTINE

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No.

Jewish Conference

Dated

J. 4th Mtg

Received
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12 Feb 1947

Palestine Conference (Jewish)

Transmit notes of 4th Meeting
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SECRET

COPY NO. 32

J. 4th Meeting

Note of the fourth meeting between United Kingdom
representatives and a delegation representing the Jewish Agency
for Palestine held in the Colonial Office on Monday, 10th
February, 1947, at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:-

UNITED KINGDOM

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.
The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P.
Sir Norman Brook

COLONIAL OFFICE

Sir Thomas Lloyd
Sir Douglas Harris
Mr J.M. Martin
Mr Trafford Smith
Mr W.A.C. Mathieson

FOREIGN OFFICE

Mr C.W. Baxter
Mr H. Beeley
Mr C.A. Gault
Mr J.P.E.C. Henniker Major

CABINET OFFICE

Mr E.A. Armstrong

JEWISH AGENCY

Mr David Ben Gurion	}	Palestine
Mr Moshe Shertok		
Mr A. Horowitz		
Mr I. Gruenbaum		
Mr Berl Locker	}	Great Britain
Professor Selig Brodetsky		
Mr J. Linton		
Mr A.S. Eban		
Dr Nahum Goldman		United States
Mr Rowson		Secretary

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The new proposals modified the Morrison plan to the extent that the 100,000 immigrants, which were to have been introduced within twelve months, were now to be spread over two years. Again, while under the Morrison plan immigrants beyond the number of 100,000

were to be introduced according to the maximum absorptive capacity of the Jewish area, under the new proposals further immigration was decided by the High Commissioner, or by an arbitration tribunal under the United Nations. At the end of the Trusteeship period of 5 years, the Jews would still be in a minority but Jewish immigration would have stopped entirely. After the five-year period Jewish settlement would be even more limited than before. There would be no settlement outside the Jewish area. The areas of Jewish settlement would consist of a few islands in the country which would never be able to join up to form a single unit. Thus there would be no possibility of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Under the trusteeship system the Jewish Agency would be abolished and replaced by the Jewish Members of the High Commissioner's Advisory Council. But the Zionist Organisation, of which the Jewish Agency was representative, had other functions. Under Article 4 of the Mandate it was required to take steps to secure the co-operation of all Jews who were willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home. Immigration was a question which concerned not only the Jews in Palestine, but the whole Jewish people throughout the world. This principle was abolished by the new proposals.

The main feature of the new proposals was that, after five years, Palestine would become an independent state with the Arabs in a majority and the Jews in a permanent minority. The memorandum purported to be based on the Mandate. In fact, it

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was the antithesis of the Mandate. Under the preamble to the Mandate it was stated that recognition had been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country. This meant two things: firstly that the Jews were not intruders into Palestine; secondly, that there were grounds for reconstituting the Jewish national home. These grounds were that the Jews were without any other home and were dependent upon the mercy of other nations. The intention was to avoid reproducing in Palestine the position of the Jews in other countries of the world.

Mr. Ben Gurion said that His Majesty's Government had drawn attention to the passage in Article 2 of the Mandate for Palestine requiring the Mandatory to be placed under such conditions as would secure the development of self-governing institutions. His Majesty's Government were wrong in thinking that this meant that Palestine should become an independent state. This would be made clear by a reference to the Mandates for Iraq and for Syria and the Lebanon, which had provided that those countries should be given facilities for progressive development towards independent statehood. The Palestine Mandate made no mention of an independent state. This was not an accident. The purpose of the Mandate was not only to cover the Jewish population of Palestine, but to establish a Jewish national home as laid down in the preamble to the Mandate.

Mr. Ben Gurion then referred to Article 6 of the Mandate which provided that the Administration of Palestine should encourage, in co-operation with the

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- (i) The Palestine Jews. For them to become a permanent minority in an Arab state was equal to a sentence of death;
- (ii) 1,200,000 Jews in Europe and oriental countries for whom entry into Palestine was a matter of life and death;
- (iii) Millions of Jews in other countries who would loyally stand by the Jews referred to in categories (i) and (ii).

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Mr. Ben Gurion said that Mr. Bevin had been shocked at the idea that 300,000 Arabs might be placed under a Jewish majority in Palestine. But under the latest proposals of His Majesty's Government it was proposed to place 700,000 Jews under the

domination of the Arabs. How was it just to place a Jewish minority under an Arab state and unjust to place an Arab minority under a Jewish state? For the Jews Palestine was the only country to which they could lay claim as their own. If they did not achieve statehood in Palestine they would, as a race, have no status in the eyes of the world. But the matter of an Arab minority in a Jewish state was quite a different one. The Arabs in Palestine were surrounded by independent Arab states with a population of some 40 million. The Palestine Arabs represented less than 2 per cent. of the whole Arab nation. If there was an unavoidable choice between having an Arab minority in a Jewish state, or a Jewish minority in an Arab state, then impartial justice would demand the former solution.

The Jewish minority in an Arab state would be a still smaller minority in the Arab world as a whole. They would be left to the tender mercy of the Arabs. It was quite likely that the Mufti would become the head of an independent Arab Palestine.

MR GILSON JONES said that the British memorandum did not propose that there should be an Arab state as suggested by Mr. Ben Gurion. He referred to paragraph 17 of the proposals which provided that in the event of disagreement in the Constituent Assembly as to the institutions of the independent state, the Trusteeship Council would be asked to advise as to future procedure. There was no reference in the memorandum to the setting up of an Arab state.

MR. BEN GURION argued that under the memorandum the alternatives were either that there should be no independence after five years, or that there should be an independent Arab state. Even the United Nations could not make a proper Jewish state out of the small areas which, under the British plan, would be allotted to the Jews.

Mr. Ben Gurion then declared that no Jews would agree to take part in the Constituent Assembly contemplated by the British proposals.

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MR CREECH JONES said that the Jewish representatives had described the memorandum as a retreat from the Morrison plan to the White Paper, all the worst features of which were retained in the new proposals. They had suggested that His Majesty's Government were trying to stabilise the Jewish National Home in Palestine at a figure of 700,000. He was astounded that they should have formed such a misconception of the plan. In his view it met most of the objections which the Jews had raised to the White Paper, contained no proposals for the crystallization of the National Home and removed the fear of ultimate Arab domination. It made most substantial concessions to the Jewish point of view on those elements of any solution which they regarded as essential. He was surprised that the Jews had found sinister intentions in every clause of the proposals.

MR GOSSETT asked Mr Creech Jones to examine the immigration provisions of the new proposals. In two years 96,000 Jews were to be admitted. Surely this was a retreat from the Morrison plan which envisaged 100,000 in 12 months. Then after two years there would be a further period during which immigration would be controlled by the High Commissioner with due regard to the criterion of economic absorptive capacity, in consultation with an advisory council of Jews and Arabs. Under this arrangement Arab opinion was brought in as a factor determining immigration even in Jewish areas. Surely this also was a retreat from the Morrison plan. If the Arabs protested against any further Jewish immigration the question would be taken to the United Nations, where the Jews were not represented.

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SIR NORMAN BROOK pointed out that the matter would be referred to an arbitration tribunal appointed by the United Nations.

MR SHERTON suggested that the Arabs would take part in the appointment of the tribunal whereas the Jews would not.

MR BEVIL remarked that what he had in mind was that the Secretary General should appoint the tribunal, a procedure followed in the case of disputes regarding the appointment of arbitration tribunals in connection with the Peace Treaties.

SIR NORMAN BROOK said that in any case the appointment of the arbitration tribunal could be discussed as a detail of the proposals.

MR LOCKER said that under the Morrison plan the Jewish province would decide on the rate of further immigration subject only to overriding control by the High Commissioner. The Arabs would have no say in the matter.

MR BEVIN asked if the Jews then preferred the Morrison plan; MR LOCKER replied that they merely wished to indicate that as the proposals were less favourable to them than that plan, which they had rejected even as a basis for discussion, they could not be expected to regard the present memorandum more favourably.

MR CREMON JONES said that there was no intention that the Arabs should have a veto over Jewish immigration, as under normal Colonial procedure the decision would rest with the High Commissioner; if the Jews disagreed with his decision the matter would then be referred to the arbitration tribunal. He urged the Jews not to condemn the proposals merely because of possible obscurities in the draft. These obscurities could be cleared up in discussion.

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MR BEN GURION suggested that there was no obscurity in paragraph 4, which stated definitely that Palestine should be set up as an independent state after five years.

MR CREECH JONES said that this was a statement of His Majesty's Government's hope that the two peoples would in that time learn to live and work together.

MR BEVIN said that the fundamental issue was between the proposal of the Jews that His Majesty's Government should set up a Jewish State in Palestine and His Majesty's Government's interpretation of the Mandate that under it they had no authority to do so. They had no right to set Arabs over Jews or Jews over Arabs. Their intention was to create as much local independence as possible within the framework of the existing Mandate. So far they had had no constructive scheme from the Jews. If the verdict of the United Nations was that a Jewish State should be set up in Palestine, then His Majesty's Government would concur in such a decision. They could not, however, establish such a State unilaterally under the existing Mandate. They were certainly not going to use British arms to force on Palestine a solution which he was satisfied was outside the terms of the Mandate. In his view a Jewish National Home as envisaged by the Mandate had been established in Palestine. Tenure of the Mandate had been a costly and never pleasant business. His Majesty's Government had tried so to govern Palestine that Jews and Arabs would come to work together for the benefit of the country. The proposals circulated represented their last attempt to achieve this object, by the establishment of local areas with

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a large degree of autonomy. If the Jews considered that the Morrison plan met this object better, then they could discuss the Morrison plan. He thought that the Arabs would probably reject the present proposals because they conceded too much to the Jews.

MR BEN GURION said that even the White Paper did not say that an independent state of Palestine would be set up after ten years. Various conditions safeguarding the life of the Jewish National Home had been included.

MR DEVLIN asserted his readiness to examine the possibility of inserting any conditions required by the Jews into the present draft. Paragraph 8 was designed to safeguard their position.

MR CREMON JONES said that the establishment of an independent state was specifically made contingent on agreement with both communities. If no agreement could be reached after four years the question would be re-submitted to the United Nations. Britain was prepared to take on a trusteeship for five years in the hope that both communities would come closer together and political institutions would be forged leading to independence at the end of the trusteeship period. The object was neither an Arab State nor a Jewish State but a State of Palestine in which neither community was dominant. In local areas each community would have control of its own affairs, but the central government would hold an equal balance between the two. If no good came of this attempt at the end of the period, the United Nations would have to decide what further steps should be taken.

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DR GOLDMAN said that as the Jews could not accept the basic principles of the plan, it seemed pointless to discuss it in detail. The position after five years would be worse for the Jews than it would have been under the Morrison plan. Under the latter the Jewish areas were at least contiguous.

MR CRNECH JONES said that in partition plans which he had studied the map had shown islands of Arabs scattered throughout the Jewish area. In some, there was an Arab area in the north and one in the south, separated by a Jewish area. The present proposals gave great elasticity in drawing the map and avoided the fragmentation of Palestine. If, however, the Jews insisted that the areas should be contiguous, then perhaps they could be worked out on a map to satisfy this requirement.

DR GOLDMAN said that the Jews would not accept any solution to the problem whereby the Jews remained a minority under an Arab majority. A Palestinian State in which the Arabs had a majority was regarded by the Jews as an Arab State. A Palestinian State with a Jewish majority was in their terminology a Jewish State. The present proposals did not ensure a Jewish majority in the whole of Palestine in five years. The facts facing the United Nations after five years would be a unitary Palestine in which the Arabs were still a majority. He could assure the British Delegation that the situation would never be reached where the two communities in Palestine could reconcile their differences and work together in a unitary state.

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It might be accepted for the sake of argument that it was impossible for His Majesty's Government to establish a Jewish State in Palestine. In that case the Jews merely wished His Majesty's Government to go to the United Nations and suggest that, as a unitary state in Palestine could not be constructed in accordance with fundamental Jewish requirements, then partition should be adopted as a solution.

MR BEVIN said that he would not make such a recommendation.

DR GOLDMAN said that it was not, however, impossible for him to make such a recommendation. The Jews were ready to take the risk. They did not ask Great Britain to set up a Jewish State in Palestine by force of British arms. Any solution on the lines of a unitary state was bound to fail, as it could not ensure for the Jews free immigration and free settlement throughout the country. He suggested that the Foreign Secretary should submit the problem to the United Nations with a recommendation for partition.

MR BEVIN said that it was his own very strong view, a view shared by all his colleagues, that if the problem could not be settled in discussion with Jews and Arabs then His Majesty's Government must go to the United Nations and simply lay before them all the schemes which had been evolved. They would not single out any one of these for specific recommendation. They would put the Arab plan and all the other plans before the Assembly. They had not had a plan from the Jews which could be submitted. They would give the history of their tenure of the mandate to the best of their ability and set forth as impartially as possible the claims of both sides. The United Nations would resort any

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suggestion from the Mandatory Power that they should endorse the application of a particular solution which Great Britain was prepared to support.

MR SHERKOK suggested that the United Nations would expect a lead from the Mandatory Power and DR GOLDMAN said that the League of Nations had always expected Mandatory Powers to submit their recommendations for the grant of independence to the territories for which they held Mandates.

MR BEVIN said that if the Jews had a plan which could be implemented within the terms of the Mandate he would be happy to see it. He would not agree to commit His Majesty's Government to any scheme before he had had that scheme put to him in detail.

DR GOLDMAN said that in the case of Transjordan, Great Britain had recognised the fact and then notified the fact to the United Nations.

MR CREMON JONES said that the independence of Transjordan was in accordance with an official declaration of policy made many years before the constitution of the United Nations. The United Nations had had an opportunity of challenging the decision but they had endorsed it. This was the first time they had heard from the Jews that no satisfactory solution could be devised within the framework of a unitary state. The Jews had admittedly suggested as one possible solution the establishment of a viable Jewish state within the frontiers of Palestine but they had not said how this should be done.

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Many Jews had expressed their view that the maintenance of a unitary Palestine was highly desirable. His Majesty's Government's present proposals were designed to build up political institutions in Palestine preserving it as a unitary state but at the same time satisfying, as far as possible, the basic requirements of both communities. The areas suggested would be a subject for discussion. The economic expansion of the Jewish community would be facilitated. If the Jews proposed to seek United Nations approval for partition they were accepting a very serious risk. They would be much better advised to accept a scheme such as the present one, which went as far as possible towards satisfying legitimate Jewish aspirations within the framework of the Mandate. If they could not accept such a scheme, there was no alternative but to submit the matter to the United Nations, setting out all the suggested solutions for judgment by world opinion.

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MR BEN GURION said that the Jews wanted either a Jewish State or that the Mandate should be carried on. Both alternatives had been rejected.

MR BEVIN interjected that the Mandate had in fact been carried on.

DR GOLDMAN said that the White Paper was incompatible with the Mandate.

MR BEN GURION repeated that the proposal for a Jewish State had been rejected. He said that while the British declared that they would not use force, they had in fact used force to implement the White Paper. The Jews would never agree to being a minority in an Arab State.

MR CREECH JONES said that whatever increases took place in the Jewish population of Palestine by whatever means, the Arab population would increase at the same time. Consequently whatever the Jews might do they would never be able to out-number the Arabs. Moreover Arabs from outside the country were attracted into Palestine by Jewish enterprise. The British proposals sought to preserve the Jews from permanent domination by the Arabs.

MR BEN GURION said that the British conception of an independent state of Palestine meant a state with an Arab majority. It would be a state composed of Palestinian nationals of Arab and Jewish race. The Jews did not want that. They were first and foremost Jews and they wanted a Jewish state in Palestine in which the Jews would be a majority.

MR BEVIN suggested that even if the Jewish State were established in Palestine it would of necessity contain some Arabs. If there were universal suffrage the Arabs in that State would still have voting power.

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MR BEN GURION said that the Jews could establish 2 million more Jews in Palestine. They know that they could do this. Belgium, for instance, carried a population of 8 million and it was a country comparable in size to Palestine. The key was modern development. The only raw materials the Jews required were brains. Instead of going to the United Nations it would be better for His Majesty's Government to retain the Mandate and abolish the White Paper. If immigration were allowed, normal conditions as the Jews saw them would return. They did not want to go to the United Nations.

MR BEVIN complained that the Jews showed no readiness to reach a reasonable compromise. Britain had been pressed on all sides to agree to set up a Jewish State. Britain could not do that. But if the Jews were to put up any reasonable scheme, His Majesty's Government would consider it.

MR SHERTOK said that it was common ground that Partition would entail at least 300,000 Arabs remaining in the Jewish State. Britain had refused to accept that situation and had therefore rejected Partition.

MR BEVIN said that Britain would not agree to put Jews under Arabs or Arabs under Jews.

MR LOCKER said that the Jews had never rejected the idea of a unitary State. They had disagreed with the proposal because they would be in a minority. Palestine must be a Jewish State or it must be administered under the Mandate but without the White Paper. The economic absorptive capacity of the country should be the limiting factor for immigration. The new British plan was a retreat from the Morrison plan which offered 100,000 immigrants in one year.

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MR BEVIN said that the figure of 4000 immigrants a month under His Majesty's Government's proposals was designed to cover the intermediate period before the setting up of the administration planned under the scheme and also to find a middle way between the opposing points of view of the Jews and the Arabs. The United States of America and the Jews were pressing for a minimum figure of 100,000 immigrants to be admitted immediately. On the other hand, the Arabs wanted immigration stopped altogether. The new proposals did not set a limit on immigration because that would depend on the economic absorptive capacity of the areas. If there were disputes over this between the mandatory power and the Arabs or the Jews, the dispute could be taken to the United Nations for arbitration. What could be fairer than that? If such a dispute were left to be settled between the interested parties in Palestine it would end in war. An international decision was therefore better. The level of economic absorptive capacity of the country was not necessarily static. The British proposals represented an honest endeavour to meet the Jews without sacrificing the Arabs. The areas to be allotted to Arabs and Jews were as yet undecided and he was willing to discuss any suggestion which might be put forward.

MR SHERTOK said that the control of land sales under the new proposals lay with the local authorities. This would enable Arabs to stop Jewish settlement and would therefore be prejudicial to Jewish development.

MR CREECH JONES said that Jews could enter Arab areas with Arab consent. The Jews assumed that under the new proposals the area of land available to them for development

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would be less than in a Jewish State. The Jews wished to return to the Mandate under which the limiting factor of Jewish development was economic absorptive capacity and this had led to disputes with the High Commissioner. Under the new proposals any dispute which arose could be taken to an impartial court for settlement. Here again economic expansion was the limiting factor and that was what the Jews had wanted. The new plan therefore met Jewish requirements but nevertheless the Jews had rejected it. This was solely because of the question of Jewish sovereignty. No British plan however had suggested Jewish sovereignty and the Jews should have said at the beginning of the talks that this was their essential requirement which did not admit of compromise. The British did not propose either an Arab or a Jewish State. The Jews now wished for the continuance of the Mandate, but if the Mandate, in the British view, would not work, Britain would be obliged to go to the United Nations who must decide the issue.

MR SHERTCK compared the new plan unfavourably with the Morrison plan in regard to immigration; under the new plan the Jews would not be in a position to take their own decisions. Both Arabs and Jews would have to be consulted over immigration for Jewish areas and the Jews would in any case not be able to enter Arab areas. From this situation the only appeal was to the United Nations.

MR CREECH JONES pointed out that in paragraph 9 of the British Government's proposals it was stated that the wellbeing of Palestine as a whole must be taken into account in deciding on immigration. This applied both to Jewish and Arab immigration. It would be natural therefore for the High Commissioner to consult both parties in his Advisory Council, but the High Commissioner

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would have the final decision. If the Jews were dissatisfied they could have recourse to the United Nations.

MR SHERTOK said that the wellbeing of Palestine as a whole was a new measure for deciding immigration. It might be that as regards a remote province the Jews would have no say at all.

After some further discussion, MR CREECH JONES agreed that if the wording of this part of the new proposals was not clear it could be redrafted; the proposals were not unalterable and could be changed by discussion if agreement could be reached by this means.

MR BEN GURION queried the fact that the exclusion of Jews from some areas of Palestine would be for the wellbeing of the whole country.

MR SHERTOK said that the British Delegation would not agree that Jewish immigration could be determined by the Jews alone. The Jews did not in fact say this. They did say that immigration should be laid down under the Mandate, but if Palestine were divided into zones the Jews should be allowed to decide immigration in those zones which were allotted to them. The British plan provided that there should be a Jewish majority in Jewish areas and an Arab majority in Arab areas. Here the question of the Negeb arose. It contained a population of about 60,000 people and at present had an Arab majority. Under the British proposals the Negeb would remain Arab territory for all time. With regard to land transfers in general the effect of the proposals would be that, whereas in the Jewish areas would be transferable land without reserve, in the Arab province it was likely that prohibition of land transfers to Jews would continue to be prohibited.

Discussion then turned on the question of immigration under Trusteeship and Mr Shertok complained that Jewish

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rights to continued immigration would be lost. They would be left to the discretion of the High Commissioner or alternatively of the arbitration tribunal. The Jews would never acquiesce in remaining as a minority in a Palestine state and this would be the effect of the British proposals.

MR BEN GURION argued that the position of the Jews under the British proposals would be very little better than under the White Paper. If His Majesty's Government decided to bring the Palestine question before the United Nations they should at least, during the interim period before this could be done, carry out the Mandate to the full extent of its implications, but if His Majesty's Government wanted an immediate settlement, they should agree to setting up a viable Jewish state in an adequate part of Palestine.

MR BEVIN invited the Jewish representatives to submit their plans for the creation of a viable state in Palestine.

The question was discussed as to the extent of the areas which would be allocated to the Jews under the British proposals.

The United Kingdom representatives explained that no final division of the country had been decided upon by His Majesty's Government but trial maps had been prepared to which no one was as yet pledged. The United Kingdom representatives would be prepared to show these trial maps to the Jewish Delegation but only on the understanding that His Majesty's Government would not be regarded as committed in any way to the division of the country shown therein and that the Jewish Delegation, for their part, would give a definite undertaking that the information

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contained in the maps would be regarded as strictly confidential and would not be communicated to the Press. It was also suggested from the British side that the Jews should put forward their plan of partition equally without prejudice. The Jewish representatives welcomed the opportunity of examining the maps on the conditions requested by the United Kingdom representatives and said that if the areas allotted to the Jews were of such a size as to satisfy Jewish requirements and they were guaranteed unrestricted immigration into their areas, it might make a difference to their attitude to the British proposals. They would in any case give the British representatives their observations in writing both on the maps and on the general principles which would be indispensable for any solution acceptable to the Jews.

It was agreed that Sir Norman Brook should make arrangements for representatives of the Jewish Delegation to meet British officials at a convenient time to examine the maps.

The meeting then adjourned.

COLOONIAL OFFICE, S.W.1.

10TH FEBRUARY, 1947.

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OUTWARD TELEGRAM

Cypher (C.T.P.)

TO PALESTINE (General Sir A. Cunningham)

FROM S. OF S., COLONIES.

Sent 11th February, 1947. 23.15 hrs.

IMMEDIATE

No. 290 Secret.

Discussions with the Jews.

Fourth meeting with Jews was held on 10th February.
Full record follows by bag. Main features were:-

1. In response to a request for the views of the Jewish Delegation on the proposals circulated to them, Ben Gurion criticised the memorandum as a retreat from the Morrison plan to the White Paper. One hundred thousand Jewish immigrants would Morrison plan further immigration was to be dependent upon the maximum absorptive capacity of the Jewish province, whereas under the new proposals the High Commissioner, advised by a council of Jews and Arabs, would take the decision from which there would be no appeal except to an arbitration tribunal in the setting up of which the Jews would have no voice; after five years the Jews in Palestine would find themselves a minority for all time, split up in non-contiguous groups occupying no greater amount of land than they did today. Under this plan, there was no possibility of establishing a Jewish State. The Jewish Agency, which had a responsibility to world Jewry and not only to the Jews of Palestine, would be abolished under the trusteeship agreement. The new proposals purported to be based on a strict interpretation of the Mandate but he regarded them as the antithesis of the Mandate. The main object of the Mandate had been to give the Jews national status in Palestine; the new plan condemned them to the position of a permanent minority in an Arab State. The Mandate for Palestine directed the Mandatory to provide for the development of self-governing institutions, but this did not mean that Palestine should be established as an independent state. Other Mandates, e.g. for Iraq and Syria, specifically used the phrase "independent state". The terminology had been varied in the Mandate for Palestine because its object had been the establishment of a Jewish National Home. The exclusion of Jews from parts of the country under the projected trusteeship agreement was

continues

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2. I said that the new proposals contained no mention of an ultimate Arab State. If at the end of the agreement, then the trusteeship council would have to advise on future steps. I expressed by astonishment at the gross misconception of the plan revealed by Ben Gurion's remarks and rejected the imputation of sinister motives. The memorandum contained most substantial concessions to the Jewish point of view, incorporated for the express purpose of covering those elements of a solution which they regarded as essential.

4. Goldman said that the Jews would not accept any solution of the problem whereby they remain a minority

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OUTWARD TELEGRAM

under an Arab majority. If His Majesty's Government took the view that they could not grant Jewish sovereignty under the Mandate then the Jews would wish them to go to the United Nations suggesting that, since a unitary state in Palestine could not be constructed in accordance with fundamental Jewish requirements, partition should be adopted as a solution. The Jews were quite prepared to take any risk involved in this procedure. They did not ask Great Britain to set up a Jewish State by force of arms.

5. Mr. Bevin stated that it was his view, shared by all his colleagues, that if the problem could not be settled in discussion with Jews and Arabs, then His Majesty's Government must go to the United Nations and simply lay before them all the schemes which had been evolved. They would not single out any one of those for specific recommendation. I pointed out that if the United Nations gave approval for partition they were accepting a very serious risk. They would be much better advised to accept a scheme such as the present one which went as far as possible towards satisfying legitimate Jewish aspirations within the framework of the Mandate. If they could not accept such a scheme, there was no alternative but to submit the matter to the United Nations setting out all the suggested solutions for judgment by world opinion.

6. Locker said that the Jews had never rejected the idea of a unitary state. Palestine must be a Jewish State or it must be administered under the Mandate without the White Paper. Economic absorptive capacity should be the limiting factor for immigration.

7. I suggested that the new proposals went far to meet all Jewish requirements with the exception of sovereignty. If this exception did not admit of compromise the Jews should have said so at the outset of discussions. Great Britain did not propose either an Arab or a Jewish State in Palestine. The Jews pressed for the continuance of the Mandate, but if the Mandate in the British view was now unworkable, Great Britain would be obliged to go to the United Nations who would decide the issue.

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8. The question was then raised of the extent of the areas to be allocated to the Jews under the British proposals. We explained that no final division of the country had been decided upon by His Majesty's Government but trial maps had been prepared to which no-one was as yet pledged. United Kingdom representatives would be prepared to show these trial maps to the Jewish Delegation but only on the understanding that His Majesty's Government would not be regarded as committed in any way to the divisions suggested and that the Jewish Delegation would keep the information strictly confidential. It was also suggested from the British side that the Jews should put forward their plan of partition equally without prejudice. Jewish representatives welcomed the opportunity of examining the maps under the conditions indicated and said that if the area allotted to the Jews were of such a size as to satisfy Jewish requirements and they were guaranteed unrestricted immigration into their areas, it might make a difference to their attitude to the British proposal. They would, in any case, give the British representatives their observations in writing both on the maps and on the general principles which would be indispensable for any solution acceptable to the Jews.

9. Sub-committee consisting of three Jewish representatives and three British officials is meeting this evening to discuss areas on a map.

Distributed to:-

Foreign Office

" "

Lord President of the Council.

No. 10 Downing Street

Cabinet Offices

" "

" "

Foreign Office Research Dept.

M.I.F.

War Office

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Mr. H. Beeley.

Mr. C.W. Baxter.

P.S. to Prime Minister.

Sir N. Brook.

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Air Commodore K.G. Buss.

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Private Secretary.

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OUTWARD TELEGRAM

Cypher (O.T.P.)

E/329/928/21

13/40
FEB 1947

TO PALESTINE (General Sir A. Cunningham)

FROM S. OF S. COLONIES.

Sent 13th February, 1947. 11.45 hrs.

IMMEDIATE

No. 301 Top Secret.

My telegram No. 290.

At the last meeting with the representatives of the Jewish Agency, the British Delegation were asked to produce a map showing the areas to be designated as Jewish areas of local administration under the scheme outlined in my telegram No. 252. of negotiation but we authorised Sir Norman Brook, Sir Douglas Harris and Mr. Beeley of the Foreign Office to meet Messrs Ben Gurion, Shertok and Horowitz and to show them confidentially the map illustrating the provincial autonomy plan recommended by the Anglo-American Expert Delegations. This map has not previously been disclosed. The Agency representatives were to be informed that the area assigned in that map for the Jewish Province was the type of area which we had in mind as the area of Jewish local administration under the new scheme.

2. The meeting took place yesterday evening with most disappointing results. The Agency representatives rejected the area assigned to the Jews in the map as being a mockery of their just claims. On being pressed to elucidate their offer to accept "a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine" they contended that such a State must include, over and above the area shown in the map, Galilee, the Gaza Sub-district, the Beersheba Sub-district and the eastern portions of the Hebron and Jerusalem Sub-districts, up to and including the Jerusalem-Jericho road. In other words, they claimed the whole of Palestine

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except the central Judaeen hills. They argued that it must be accepted that any viable Jewish State would include from six to eight hundred thousand Arabs.

3. I am afraid that this meeting confirmed the view we had formed, that, apart from all other difficulties, any scheme of partition which we could defend in the United Nations as not being demonstrably unfair and unreasonable to the Arabs would be unacceptable to the Zionists.

4. In these circumstances, no reply is called for to my telegram No. 272 as the boundaries there described are unlikely to be of practical importance.

5. The extent of the Jewish claim described in paragraph 2 was revealed in confidence and should be so treated.

M.S. 25	Mr. Mathieson
Secretary of State	Mr. Higham
Sir T. Lloyd	Mr. Fitzgerald
Mr. Martin	Mr. Bennett
Sir D. Harris	Mr. Bigg
Mr. Trafford Smith	
Foreign Office	Mr. H. Beeley.
" "	Mr. C.W. Baxter.
Lord President of the Council.	
No. 10 Downing Street	P.S. to Prime Minister.
Cabinet Offices	Sir W. Brook.
" "	Mr. C.G. Eastwood.
" "	Mr. E.A. Armstrong.
Foreign Office	
Research Dept.	Air Commodore K.C. Buss.
M.I. 5.	Mr. J.C. Robertson.
War Office	C.I.G.S.
" "	M.I. 3A.
" " (M.O. 4.)	Lt. Col. J.G. Atkinson.
Admiralty	Mr. G.C.B. Dodds.
Air Ministry	Private Secretary.
Ministry of Defence	Private Secretary.
" " "	Sir Henry Wilson Smith.

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PALESTINE

Registry Number E1443/928/31
FROM U.K. Del.
No. Jewish Conference
Dated J. 5th mtg
Received in Registry
13 Feb 1947
14 Feb 1947

Palatine Conference (Jewish)
Transmits notes of 5th meeting
with Jewish representatives.

Last Paper.

1239

References.

(Minutes.)

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H.B. 27/2

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

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W. Ton
✓ F.O.R.O. Feb 24

(Action completed.)

GE/24/2

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19/8/48

Next Paper.

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FOR THE USE OF UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVES ONLY NOT TO BE
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SECRET

COPY NO. 27

J. 5th Meeting

Note of the fifth meeting between United Kingdom representatives
and a delegation representing the Jewish Agency for Palestine held
in the Colonial Office on Thursday, 13th February, 1947, at 3.0 p.m.

PRESENT:-

UNITED KINGDOM

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.
The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P.
Sir Norman Brook

SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Sir Douglas Harris
Mr J.M. Martin
Mr Trafford Smith
Mr W.A.C. Mathieson
Mr E.R. Edmonds

FOREIGN OFFICE

Mr C.W. Baxter
Mr H. Beeley
Mr C.A. Gault
Mr J.P.E.C. Henniker Major

CABINET OFFICE

Mr E.A. Armstrong

JEWISH AGENCY

Mr David Ben Gurion	}	Palestine
Mr Moshe Shertok		
Mr A. Horowitz		
Mr I. Gruenbaum		
Mr T. Kollek		
Mr U. Heydt	}	Great Britain
Mr Berl Locker		
Mr J. Linton		
Dr Nahum Goldmann		United States
Mr S. Rowson		Secretary

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MR. ONE CH JONES opened the meeting by saying that this was likely to be their last discussion . He had wished for something hopeful to emerge from their conversations but he was afraid that the British Delegation had received little encouragement from their last meeting with the Arabs. Nor had they received much help from the Jews, who had rejected all the British proposals without submitting any alternatives of their own. He was very conscious of the urgent necessity of reaching a conclusion and of the pressure from various quarters for a final solution of the problem. He and the Foreign Secretary, therefore, felt obliged to report on the following day to the Cabinet how far their discussions with Arabs and Jews had taken them. Parliament would expect a statement on the position resulting from these talks early in the next week and a debate would probably be necessary on the whole Palestine problem before the end of that week. There was little more to discuss if the suggestions put to the Jews had been rejected out of hand. He had hoped that it might be possible to explore some of the ideas in the latest British proposals a little further and to persuade the Jews to put on the table plans acceptable to them. He would now have to report to the Cabinet that the British representatives had failed to find a way through the conflicting claims. They would probably have to say that, as in existing circumstances the administration of the Mandate gave no satisfaction to either community and as it had proved impossible to find a basis acceptable to both for the further operation of the

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Mandate, the whole matter must be referred to the United Nations. He confessed complete inability to find agreement or even acquiescence from both parties in any scheme which had been submitted. The Cabinet must, therefore, be told that no common ground existed and that the discussions had produced little of practical value. The Foreign Secretary and he had thought that the Jews ought to be told of this situation. He could only regret the impasse which had been reached.

MR. BEN GURION said that Mr. Creech Jones had accused them of submitting no alternative proposals. This was not true. They had made three suggestions:-

- (1) The whole of Western Palestine should be made into a Jewish State;
- (2) If this was not possible, Great Britain should resume the administration of the Mandate as it had been administered prior to 1937;
- (3) If Great Britain could not adopt this second course, the Jews were willing to discuss the establishment of a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine.

The objection had been made that the Jews had never explained what they meant by the third possibility. They had explained this in detail to Sir Norman Brook and other British officials informally on 11th February.

MR. BEVIN asked if the views then expressed could be regarded as official.

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MR. BEN GURION said that the proposals as then elucidated could be communicated by the British Delegation to the Cabinet, if that was what Mr Bevin meant by "official".

Mr Ben Gurion continued that Mr Creech Jones had suggested that the administration of the Mandate had been unsatisfactory to both Jews and Arabs. If he meant the administration of the Mandate in accordance with the White Paper of 1939, then the suggestion was true. But if he meant the Mandate as originally conceived and as administered up to 1937 then it was untrue to say that this would not satisfy the Jews.

MR. CREECH JONES asked if the interpretation put on the purpose of the Mandate by the Jews was to be taken as the establishment of a Jewish sovereign state in Palestine. Was that the end towards which they wished Mandatory Government to be directed? The Arabs refused to accept such a position. It was the existence of this conflict which made further administration of the Mandate extremely difficult.

MR. BEN GURION said that the Jews regarded the ultimate object of the Mandate to be the establishment of a Jewish State, and the Mandatory Power should encourage the Jews so to expand their national home by immigration and settlement as to make the Jews the majority in the whole country. The Jews wished the Mandatory Power to declare its intention of administering the Mandate on those terms until the Jews had attained their majority; at that stage the independence of Palestine as a Jewish State would be established. If the Mandatory was not

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prepared to make such a declaration now, the Jews were willing to refrain from raising the question of the ultimate end of Mandatory Government. They would wish to see the administration encouraging Jewish immigration up to the maximum extent of economic absorptive capacity, while preserving the rights and position of the existing inhabitants. If the Mandatory could not continue on this basis then the Jews were prepared to consider a plan of partition. They had already indicated the area which they would regard as adequate provided that in that area they would have free immigration and settlement and Jewish sovereignty. He hoped that Mr. Creech Jones would report to the Cabinet that these were the alternative proposals put up by the Jewish Delegation. On behalf of the Jewish Agency he authorised Mr. Creech Jones to inform his colleagues of the area indicated by the Jews on 11th February as adequate for a viable state.

MR. CREECH JONES then asked if, assuming Mandatory Government were conducted on the lines followed prior to the White Paper of 1939, the Jews would be prepared to accept the ruling of the High Commissioner regarding the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

MR. BEN GURION said that what was required was finality. The Jews wished the Mandatory Government to affirm their intention of so administering the country that the ultimate establishment of a Jewish State in the whole of Western Palestine was assured. This object should be re-affirmed by the United Nations. In those circumstances immigration should

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be controlled by the Jewish Agency. If this was impossible then the procedure previously adopted should again be followed, whereby the High Commissioner, in consultation with the Jewish Agency, determined a six-monthly labour quota on the basis of economic absorptive capacity. Other immigrants in non-labour categories would be admitted as before.

MR. CREECH JONES said that the test of British administration would be how fast it had moved towards self-government in Palestine. The Jews had expressed their adherence to democratic principles, but no representative institutions had been established in Palestine. At the centre was an alien government imposed by Great Britain. It would take the Jews a very long time to establish themselves as a majority in Palestine. If the United Nations insisted, as they probably would, that Palestine must move towards self-government under representative democratic institutions, what would the Jews do in the long period before they attained a numerical majority?

MR. BEN GURION said that any speculation on this issue must be largely hypothetical. The Jews, however, were convinced as a result of their experience that they could quickly become the majority in Palestine, without damaging the position of the Arabs, if free immigration and settlement were allowed. He would be prepared to accept a time limit of years at the end of which the Mandate would be relinquished and self-government would be established.

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MR. DEVIN interjected that this was exactly what had been offered to the Jews.

MR. BEN GURION said that the offer must ensure that the Jews in Palestine would never be dominated by the Arabs.

MR. CRESCH JONES said that from an administrative point of view it was impossible to revert to the situation existing before 1937. At that time there was an alien administration with no roots in the people which was completely unresponsive to the feelings of either community. It could hardly fail to come into conflict all the time with either Arabs or Jews. This was an intolerable position for any administration and one which could not be restored.

MR. SHERTOK said that the Jews were prepared to see substantial development in the autonomy of municipal areas and functional groups.

MR. DEVIN again interjected that this was exactly what had been offered to them.

MR. BEN GURION said that what they objected to was not this aspect of the proposals but the provision whereby the Jews were excluded from certain parts of the country. If they were excluded from one part they must be compensated by freedom in the other. Immigration must not be limited artificially. They could never remain a minority in an Arab State. These were the basic Jewish objections to the Arab proposals.

MR. CRESCH JONES said that the British proposals provided for the application, after two years, of the criterion of economic absorptive capacity.

MR. BEN GURION complained that economic absorptive capacity had not been established as the sole determining factor. Immigration, like any vital factor in the life of the people, could not be conducted by arbitration.

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MR CRETECH JONES said that experience in the past had shown that divergent estimates of this capacity could be made. In the event of similar disagreement in the future, the British proposals provided for the submission of the question to an independent and impartial tribunal.

MR SHERTOK said that the proposals stated that the continuance and extent of Jewish immigration would be decided by the High Commissioner with due regard to economic absorptive capacity. This implied that the High Commissioner would have the power completely to prohibit Jewish immigration. The Arabs had also been given power to appeal to the United Nations against the continuance and scale of Jewish immigration. Immigration was a dynamic process which could not tolerate the delays inherent in reference to international bodies.

MR DEVIN said that the Jews claimed a Jewish sovereign state in Palestine. Great Britain was not charged with the establishment of such a state under the Mandate. The obligation was to promote the establishment of a Jewish national home. The British Government had no power under the Mandate to establish a Jewish State; in those circumstances the Jews then asked Great Britain to accept responsibility for wholesale Jewish immigration into Palestine, notwithstanding the inevitable Arab opposition. The Jews wished to have free immigration controlled only by themselves.

MR SHERTOK interjected that they would accept control by the High Commissioner provided his decision was taken purely on considerations of the economic absorptive capacity of the whole country.

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MR BEVIN said that the Jewish contention amounted to this:- if the Arabs objected to Jewish immigration, however controlled, then they must be held in subjection by the armed forces of Great Britain. This meant that His Majesty's Government were faced with the prospect of constant conflict with one side or the other.

DR GOLDMAN said that such conflict could be avoided by the establishment of two separate States.

MR BEVIN said that he had examined the proposals outlined by the Jews on 11th February for the establishment of a Jewish State in part of Palestine, and found that there was no possibility of creating from the remainder a viable state for the Arabs. The only possibility would be to attach the fragment of territory left for the Arabs to some other Arab State. This Great Britain could not do unilaterally. He was driven to the conclusion that Great Britain must now surrender the Mandate. His Majesty's Government had met an unreasoning attitude on both sides and they could therefore evolve no acceptable solution.

MR SHERTOK said that under a Jewish State the Arabs could continue to live where they were.

MR BEVIN said that under the Jews the Arabs would have no rights but would remain in a permanent minority in a land which they had held for 2,000 years.

MR SHERTOK maintained that the Arabs in a Jewish State would enjoy the same equality of rights as the Jews did in England, where everyone was equal before the law.

MR BEN GURION said that clearly the matter must be put again to the test of public opinion. He could not see why, if everyone were equal before the law in England, the same rights could not be assured for every citizen of a Jewish State. The Jews claimed equality as a people and this could only be found in Jewish sovereignty in Palestine.

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MR BEVIN said he would have no objection to the establishment of a Jewish State, if the United Nations so decided. In his opinion, Palestine should by now have become an independent State with Jewish and Arab citizens. He had tried very hard to bring this about. He considered that Great Britain had achieved a high degree of success in establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine.

MR LOCKER said that under the British plan the future of the Jews after the first two years remained obscure, but it was probable that in the end the country would come to be ruled by an Arab majority.

MR CREWCH JONES suggested that the Jewish representatives should think of democracy not simply in terms of western democratic systems. There were many plural societies in the world; several examples were in the British Colonial Empire. It was a question of preserving the democratic spirit and ensuring that special interests were represented.

MR BEN GURION said that in countries other than Palestine the Jews did not claim special privileges as compared with the other inhabitants, nor did they want special privileges in Palestine. They believed in the principle of absolute equality as between men. But they did claim Palestine as their own country in which they should be allowed to become the majority.

DR GOLDMAN suggested that, as it was clear that no long term solution of the problem was possible by agreement between the British Government and the Jews, consideration should be given to the interim arrangements which should be made during the transition period before the Palestine problem was submitted to the United Nations.

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MR CREECH JONES said that discussion of interim arrangements would be premature until the British Cabinet had decided their policy.

At this point SIR NORMAN BROOK showed the Jewish Delegates a map prepared in the Colonial Office as a result of his conversations with Jewish representatives on 11th February and asked whether the area which the Jews would claim as their minimum requirement under a scheme of partition was correctly shown on this map.

MR BEN GURION accepted the map as substantially representing the Jewish claim.

MR LOCKER said that he presumed that after the Cabinet had considered the question, the Jews would be told the decision of the British Government. He said that, at this stage, it might be worth discussing some of the details of the British plan which were still obscure to the Jews.

MR CREECH JONES considered that such discussion would be unprofitable in view of the fact that the Jews had rejected the scheme as a whole.

There followed a short discussion as to the fundamental basis of the British submission to the United Nations the necessity for which the Jewish representatives understood though they did not positively desire it.

SIR NORMAN BROOK said that the position seemed to be as follows. The Jews had stated their aim, which was that the Mandate should be administered with the object of creating a Jewish state; the British Government had said

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that as Mandatory they had no power to implement that aim; it was, therefore, necessary for the British Government to refer the question to the only other authority which might be in a position to implement that aim, the United Nations.

Several Jewish representatives said that the establishment of a Jewish state was the logical end of the Mandate, and if the British Government could administer the Mandate as they had done before 1937, this would also have been the result in practice. The Jews did not expect the British Government to accept this point of view; all they asked was that the British Government should in the future determine immigration on the basis of economic absorptive capacity.

SIR NORMAN BROOK said that the Jews wanted a final settlement of the problem either by the immediate establishment of a Jewish state or by a policy of immigration so conducted that it would lead to the eventual emergence of a Jewish majority in the country. It would of course be disingenuous for the British Government to continue to act as a Mandatory if they were conscious that this must be the inevitable result of their administration. It was that issue which the British Government would have to put to the United Nations if the Cabinet so decided.

It was suggested from the Jewish side that the British Government had already made a departure from the Mandate no less definite than that which the British Government thought the Jews were now suggesting. That departure was the White Paper of 1939.

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MR CREECH JONES said that the Labour Party disliked the White Paper. The Labour government had inherited the legacy of the White Paper but they had hoped that if the British plan had been accepted the objectionable features of the White Paper would have disappeared.

MR CREECH JONES said that their discussions had now come to an end. The decision of the British Government would be communicated to the Jews as soon as possible.

The meeting then adjourned.

COLONIAL OFFICE, S.W.1.

13TH FEBRUARY, 1947.

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PALESTINE

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11 Feb

No. *Polish Conference*

J. H.

21 Feb 1947
22 Feb 1947

Polish Conference (Jewish)
transmits record of interview by
Colonial Secretary to Agudat
Israel World Organisation on
Feb 10, 1947.

Last Paper.

1443

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

E. Dept Comps.

Amman

Bagdad

Beirut

B.M.F.O.

Bairn

Damascus

Feddle

W. Ton Feb.

F.O.R.D. 24

(Action
completed.)

F.C.M. 26/2

(Index.)

19/4/48

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(Minutes.)

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22 FEB

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CONFIDENTIAL

J.4

COPY NO. 27

PALESTINE

Note by the Colonial Office

The attached record of an interview granted by the Colonial Secretary to representatives of the World Organisation on the 10th February, 1947 is circulated as complementary to the views expressed by representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, already circulated in this series.

Colonial Office, S.W.1.

21ST FEBRUARY, 1947.

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Reference
FO 371 / 61873

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COLONIAL OFFICE

The Rt.Hon. A. Creech Jones M.P.
Sir Thomas Lloyd
Mr. J.M. Martin
Mr. Trafford Smith
Mr. E.N. Fitzgerald

AGUDAS ISRAEL WORLD ORGANISATION

Rabbi I. Leivin
Mr. H. Goodman
Rabbi Horowitz
Rabbi Babad
Mr. B. Strauss
Mr. J. Springer.

After the Secretary of State had welcomed the representatives of Agudas Israel, Rabbi Leivin expressed the gratitude of orthodox Jewry for having been granted an opportunity of stating their views before grave decisions were taken affecting the future of their ancient homeland. He hoped that even now it was not too late to bring all that Agudas Israel had wished to ^{bring} ~~attend~~ the Conference ^{last} ~~last~~ September but had seen no purpose in coming when other Jewish bodies abstained. They had been the first to suggest informal talks, and were accordingly rather disappointed that they had not been invited to take part in them and that they had not been shown officially His Majesty's Government's plan which they had so far seen only in the Press. They were not connected with the Jewish Agency and deprecated the exclusive recognition which His Majesty's Government seemed to accord to that body. They would like to press their claim to be consulted as an international Jewish organisation representing orthodox Jews throughout the world and particularly in Eastern Europe. He suggested that His Majesty's Government should give Agudas Israel official cognizance of the plan and then ask the various Jewish organisations to discuss it either together or separately. No one Jewish body had the right to speak in the name of all Jewry. From the reports they had seen Agudas Israel were prepared to study the plan as a basis of negotiation to solve the Palestine and Jewish problem but wished clarification of two points:

- (a) Was the plan meant to supersede or to implement the Mandate?
- (b) What would be the policy of immigration in two years time?

Mr. Horowitz, speaking on behalf of the 1,000,000 orthodox Jews of U.S.A., asked that some immediate relief might be given to the Jewish remnant in Europe.

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Mr. Creech Jones apologised fully if Agudas Israel should feel itself in any way slighted by the delay in holding this discussion. Nothing was further from the intention of His Majesty's Government. The difficulties had been caused by the refusal of the Zionist Executive first in September and then at Basle to attend the Conference in London. When the Conference with the Arab delegates resumed in January, His Majesty's Government had decided that no great progress could be made when one of the main interested parties was absent and had therefore invited the Jewish Agency to hold informal talks at the same time. Up to date only exploratory discussions had been had with both sides. It would have complicated the discussions unduly to have introduced additional bodies on both sides. The Jewish Agency's special position was, of course, established under the Mandate.

His Majesty's Government had now put forward a broad plan, on which they would hear the Jewish Agency's views later in the day. He would consult his colleagues regarding Agudas Israel's request for official cognizance of the plan and inform them of the answer as soon as possible. In the meantime he stressed the fact that His Majesty's Government had not yet finally committed themselves to any one policy, and would welcome the positive proposals of other Jewish organisations. He suggested that Agudas Israel should, therefore, submit their own suggestions for the consideration of His Majesty's Government. He considered the present plan a sound basis for discussion and it was his sincere desire to implement the Mandate. It was most unfortunate that certain sections of American Jewry saw fit to attack His Majesty's Government with such bitterness at the present time.

Mr. Goodman said that briefly their proposals would be:

- (a) Short term - increased immigration
- (b) Long term - along the lines of His Majesty's Government's plan.

Rather than submit a fresh policy of their own, they would prefer to offer comments on His Majesty's Government's plan in consultation with the moderate elements of the Jewish Agency. In reply to Mr. Creech Jones' question whether members of the Jewish Agency would be willing to co-operate with them, Mr. Goodman said he felt certain that some at least would be ready to do so.

Mr. Horowitz hoped that some gesture with regard to immigration could be made at once, but Mr. Creech Jones explained that since immigration was one of the basic problems under discussion at the Conference, it would be clearly improper to make it the subject of an independent decision. In reply to further questions Mr. Creech Jones said that according to His Majesty's Government's plan;

- (i) After some 100,000 immigrants had been admitted immigration would be governed by the broad principle of economic capacity, which, in the event of disagreement with the High Commissioner's decision, would be settled ultimately by an international tribunal set up by the United Nations.

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- (ii) The status of the Jewish Agency would be discussed again after five years.

Rabbi Leivin said he was glad to hear that a final decision had not yet been taken as regards immigration. Agudas Israel was anxious only to save the remnants of the Jewish people, and still hoped that His Majesty's Government would offer some immediate measure of relief which would help to change the hostile atmosphere. He thanked Mr. Creech Jones for his kindness in granting them an interview.

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11

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E 1607

1947

PALESTINE

22 FEB

Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E1607/928/31

U.K. Del.

Political Conf.

F. 5

21 Feb 1947

22 Feb 1947

Political Conference (Jewish)
Transmits reply from Jewish Agency
to UNHCP Proposal contained in
P.O. 1615.

Last Paper.

1606

References.

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(How disposed of.)

E. Dept. Conf.

Amman

Bagdad

Beirut

B. M. O.

Paris

Damascus

Teddah

W. Hon.

F.O.R.D.

(Action
completed.)

10/24

(Index.)

10/24

Next Paper.

1608

(Minutes.)

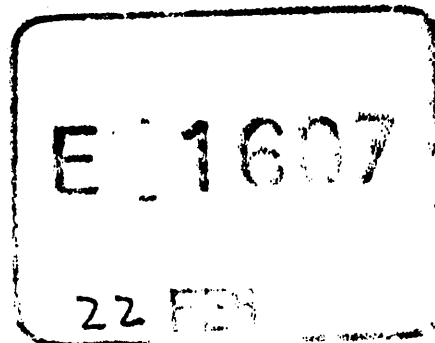
H.B. 24/2

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S E C R E T

J. 5

COPY NO. 27

PALESTINE

Note by the Colonial Office

Agency for Palestine in reply to the proposal of His Majesty's
Government circulated to the Arab Delegations as P.C.(A)(P) 5
and to the Jewish Agency under cover of the letter from the
Colonial Office appended to paper J. 3.

Colonial Office, S.W.1.

21ST FEBRUARY, 1947.

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Reference **FO 371 / 61873**

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REPLY OF THE JEWISH AGENCY TO HIS MAJESTY'S
GOVERNMENT'S MEMORANDUM OF 7TH FEBRUARY, 1947

1. The Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine has given careful consideration to the memorandum put forward by the representatives of His Majesty's Government on 7th February, 1947.

2. There are three vital interests which the Executive of the Jewish Agency seeks to preserve in any settlement that may be devised for the solution of the Palestine problem. These are:

- A. Freedom of Jewish immigration into Palestine up to the country's economic absorptive capacity.
- B. Freedom to settle on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes, and to develop the country's potentialities.
- C. Freedom to develop the Jewish National Home to the position of a self-governing independent Jewish State.

3. The duty of the mandatory Power to facilitate Jewish immigration and close settlement by Jews on the Land is clearly stated in the Mandate.

4. The Royal Commission on Palestine (1937) stated that "unquestionably the primary purpose of the Mandate, as expressed in its Preamble and its articles, is to promote the establishment of the Jewish National Home". The Preamble of the Mandate, after quoting the Balfour Declaration states:

"Recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for re-constituting their national home in that country."

These words express the intention of the Mandate to re-constitute an independent Jewish commonwealth such as existed in the past. A status of political independence was thus envisaged by the authors of the Mandate as the logical outcome of the mandatory process. (Report of the Royal Commission, pp. 24-25 - Cmd. 5479, 1937). This was clearly recognised and agreed to by the representatives of the Arab people, as is evident from the declarations of the Emir Feisal (Feisal-Weizmann Treaty published in The Times, 10th June, 1936, and of the Syrian Delegation to the Peace Conference (David Hunter Miller: "My Diary of the Peace Conference", Vol. XIV, pp. 389-415).

5. The proposals contained in the memorandum are incompatible with all three basic purposes of the Mandate: Immigration, Land Settlement, and ultimate Statehood.

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A. Immigration

6. The memorandum of the 7th February provides for the immigration of 96,000 Jews at the rate of 4,000 a month over a period of two years. The Executive of the Jewish Agency begs to recall that twenty months have elapsed since the proposal to admit 100,000 Jews immediately was first submitted to His Majesty's Government. The Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry recommended their quickest possible transfer, and even the Morrison Plan, which the Jewish Agency regarded as unacceptable, provided for the entry of 100,000 within a year.

7. The memorandum further provides that after the first two years it shall be open to the High Commissioner, in consultation with his Advisory Council, composed of Arab as well as of Jewish representatives, to determine whether immigration should at all continue, even into the Jewish areas, and if so at what rate. This provision replaces the positive injunction of the mandate to "facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions", which injunction, as laid down by the Council of the League of Nations, signified that immigration is to proceed up to the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

B. Land Settlement

8. The obligation of the Mandatory Power to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land is not limited to any area of Palestine, but applies to the whole country. The elementary principle of equality before the law requires that all citizens shall have equal rights of access and settlement in all parts of their country. To discriminate against any citizens on grounds of race or religion is a violation both to the Mandate and to democratic principles. It is especially incongruous to discriminate against Jews in the right of access and settlement in the country designated by history and international law as the Jewish National Home.

9. It is for these reasons that the Jewish Agency has always protested strongly against the Land Ordinance of 1940, which discriminated against Jews in their National Home by allowing them free right of purchase and settlement in no more than five per cent of Western Palestine (332,160 acres out of 6,504,000 acres). This legislation was officially condemned by the Labour Party.

10. The memorandum now submitted by His Majesty's Government provides for the perpetuation of this discriminatory legislation over the major part of the country. Paragraph 11 reads:

"Control over transfers of land, including the power to amend the existing Land Transfer Regulations, would be conferred on the local authorities."

The local authorities in question are to be established in areas where Arabs and Jews form a substantial majority (Paragraph 7). It follows that in the bulk of the country, the Arab local authorities would be free to prevent the transfer of land to Jews.

11. The effect of the enactment on prospects of Jewish development and of land reclamation in Palestine may be illustrated by two examples:

(i) Galilee: Under the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 this area was to have formed part of the French Mandated territory. It was only after the issue of the Balfour

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Declaration that the British Government laid claim to it, on the ground that its inclusion within the British Mandate was essential for the establishment of the Jewish National Home, and it was in deference to the claim so motivated that France eventually ceded Galilee to British Mandatory rule. If all the derelict areas of mountainous Galilee were reclaimed and properly cultivated, the territory could be made to support a far larger population. For this reason, and also for historical reasons, the Royal Commission in 1937 advocated its inclusion in the Jewish State. The effect of Paragraph 7 of His Majesty's Government's new proposals would be to close that area to new Jewish settlement.

(ii) The Negev: This area, comprising the Beersheba sub-district, is sparsely inhabited and almost entirely derelict. The effect of the Government's proposals would be to deny the Jews access to the largest undeveloped and under-populated tract of land in the country, and thus to perpetuate the stagnation in which it has lain for centuries past.

C. Constitution and Statehood

12. The memorandum envisages a trusteeship period of five years during which the provisions of the Mandate relative to Jewish immigration and land settlement would be superseded by the restrictive and discriminatory enactments of Paragraphs 7 and 11. After five years, the intention is to confer independence on Palestine as unitary state. Thus, when the Jewish population reaches some 700,000 to 800,000, it would come under the domination of the Arab majority, whereupon Jewish immigration would cease.

13. The Executive of the Jewish Agency can in no way agree that this measure is in accordance either with the purpose or the provisions of the Mandate. A clear and purposeful distinction was made between the constitutional principles of the Palestine Mandate and those of other Mandates of the same category. Thus, Article 1 of the Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon reads:

"The Mandatory shall frame, within a period of three years from the coming into force of this mandate, and organic law for Syria and the Lebanon

"The Mandatory shall enact measures to facilitate the progressive development of Syria and the Lebanon as independent States"

The Draft Mandate for Mesopotamia, as submitted by Mr. Balfour on 7th December, 1920, to the Secretariat-General of the League of Nations for the approval of the Council of the League of Nations, reads as follows:-

"Article 1. The Mandatory will frame an Organic Law for Mesopotamia ... It shall contain provisions designed to facilitate the progressive development of Mesopotamia as an independent State...."

It will be observed that instead of the term "independent State" used here, the Palestine Mandate provided only for the development of "self-governing institutions". This careful distinction is clear evidence that the primary purpose of the Palestine Mandate was not the establishment of an independent State but, as emphasised by the Royal Commission, the establishment of a Jewish National Home.

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- (c) That, in the event of a final settlement being required immediately, the Jewish Agency would be ready, as stated by the Executive in its letter to His Majesty's Government of 16th August, 1946 and again in the recent talks, to consider a compromise scheme for the setting up of a "viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine". If the proposed State would, on examination, be found viable and its area adequate, the Executive would recommend the acceptance of the scheme. The State should have complete control over immigration and development and be represented in the United Nations. Such a State, too, would be based on complete equality for all citizens with the necessary safeguards for religious, cultural and linguistic needs.

18. The Executive of the Jewish Agency regrets to state that all these suggestions were rejected by the British Delegation.

19. So long as a satisfactory agreement on the future of Palestine is not reached, the Jewish Agency is bound to maintain the rights of the Jewish people to return to its historic homeland and reconstitute there its National Home, to the full extent envisaged in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.

London,

13.2.47.

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E 1608

168

1947

22

Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E 1608/928/21

U.K. Del.

Palatine Conf.

J 6.

21 Feb 1947
22 Feb 1947

Palatine Conference (Jewish)
Transmit record of interview by
Colonial Secretary to Anglo-Jewish
Association on Feb 11th.

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1607

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Amman

Bagdad

Beirut

BMEU

Paris

Damascus

Teddq

W. Don

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Feb
24(Action
completed.)

(Index.)

JEN/26/2

19/8/48

Next Paper.

1609

(Minutes.)

See E 1609

H.B. 24/2

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Reference
FO 371/61873

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J. 6.

THE ARAB OR JEWISH DELEGATION

E 1628 COPY NO. 27

22 FEB

PALESTINE

The attached record of an interview granted by the Colonial Secretary to representatives of the Anglo-Jewish Association on the 14th February, 1947, is circulated as complementary to the views expressed by representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, already circulated in this series.

Colonial Office, S.W.1.

21ST FEBRUARY, 1947.

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FO 371 61873

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PRESENT:

COLONIAL OFFICE

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.,
Sir Douglas Harris
Mr. E.N. Fitzgerald

ANGLO-JEWISH ASSOCIATION

Mr. Leonard Stein
Mr. Neville Laski, K.C.

After MR. CREECH JONES had welcomed the delegates, MR. STEIN said that the Association would not reject the new plan out of hand because it had the two great merits of allowing further immigration and of granting a measure of Jewish autonomy. Some points, however, needed further clarification. He would urge that the immigration should start as soon as possible, and that after the 96,000 Jews had been admitted some more positive criterion than "economic absorptive capacity" should be laid down for the next three years. He would also urge that the measure of area and location of the Jewish zones and the measure of autonomy which would be granted. In the matter of Land Purchase, it was not clear whether the Arabs could prevent the Jews from buying land in the Arab zones. The future of the Negev had not been mentioned, although it was the only large unoccupied area. As regards the Advisory Council, he wished to know whether the Jewish members would be nominated or elected. Finally he expressed anxiety about the wording of the proposed Trusteeship Agreement which should, he considered, be based on the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, and not be so framed as to make a new start. If at the end of the transitional period the future of Palestine was referred to the United Nations the wording of the Agreement might well affect their decision.

The Association would offer the following constructive suggestion. It advocated some form of Partition, not because that would establish a Jewish State, but because it would allow free immigration and free expression to the Jewish people. It would bring a clear decision at once and avoid the suspense of the five years' period suggested by the latest plan. The Jews would feel that that plan was a pointer to the submergence of the Jewish community in an Arab State, and the present unrest would therefore continue. He thought that, in any case, His Majesty's Government should announce a policy forthwith and allow immigration to begin without delay.

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MR. LASKI, speaking as a non-Zionist Jew, asked that some weapon should be given to the Jewish Agency and Hagana which would enable them to enlist the support of the whole community in the suppression of terrorism. Some concession over immigration would be the best weapon; the amendment of the Land Transfers Regulations might be another.

MR. CREECH JONES said that His Majesty's Government had made every effort to reach an agreement acceptable to both sides. The latest plan had been left purposely vague and had been put forward as a basis of discussion only. The Jewish Agency Executive had, however, demanded a Jewish State; and the Arab delegates had refused to move from their own proposals published last September. They had made it clear that the Arab States would oppose Partition by all possible means. He would, however, consider the various points raised by Mr. Stein.

His Majesty's Government had proposed the admission of 96,000 Jews in two years, and that for the next three years the High Commissioner should decide the rate according to the criterion of economic absorptive capacity. The principles governing that criterion could be decided by discussion. In the event of disagreement, the plan allowed an appeal to an independent international tribunal.

The Jewish autonomous areas were in the main contiguous and did not differ greatly from those outlined in the Morrison plan. The boundaries, however, were not finally settled but were discussable. It was the intention of His Majesty's Government to devolve as much real power as possible to the Jewish authorities. As regards Land Purchase the minds of His Majesty's Government were still open and this point could again be decided by discussion with both parties. In any event the Jews would have the opportunity of expansion in large areas. The question of the Negev also, could be made the subject of discussion.

His Majesty's Government wished to set up an Advisory Council in order to associate the Central Government with the people, and hoped by this means to allay in some degree the Jewish fear of domination by the Arabs. At the end of four years a Constituent Assembly would be established to decide the future of the country. If this Assembly could not reach an agreement, then the whole question would be referred to the United Nations. His Majesty's Government would not oppose the inclusion of the wording of the Balfour Declaration and of the Mandate in the proposed Trusteeship Agreement.

Unfortunately, however, there had been no sign of agreement between the two parties in the recent discussions, and there was no chance of making a Trusteeship Agreement without Arab consent. His Majesty's Government might feel compelled to refer the problem to the United Nations as soon as possible.

As regards the positive proposal of Mr. Stein, MR. CREECH JONES said that there were difficulties in reading the establishment of a Jewish State into the words of the Mandate. He personally had favoured Partition at first, but now realised the insuperable problems that it involved.

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His Majesty's Government would not, however, oppose it at the United Nations, if it were proposed as a solution. In reply to MR. STEIN's question whether the provincial autonomy plan could be implemented without reference to the United Nations, MR. CREECH JONES said that it could be, but it had not been accepted by either party. MR. STEIN then asked whether His Majesty's Government would adopt a neutral attitude at the United Nations and whether immigration would be allowed to continue in the interim period. MR. CREECH JONES answered that both these points would be covered in a statement in Parliament shortly. MR. STEIN thanked MR. CREECH JONES for granting them an interview.

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1947

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E 1608 173

PALESTINE

22

Registry Number } E 1609/928/31
FROM U.K. Del.
No. Palestine
Dated Conference
Received in Registry } I.Y.
21 Feb 1947
22 Feb 1947

Palestine Conference (Jewish)
Transmits record of interview by
Colonial Secretary to Board of
Representatives of British Jews on Feb 17.

Last Paper.

1608

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Bagdad
Beirut
B.M.F.O.
Cairo
Damascus Feb 24
Teddq
W. Yon
F.O.R.D.

(Action completed.)

12/11/46

(Index.)

19/1/48

Next Paper.

1748

(Minutes.)

See also E 1606 and E 1608. These papers
are of interest as showing the interpretation
placed by the Colonial Secretary upon the
latest British problems. See especially the
marked passages.

H.B. 24/2

Wm 24/2

In P.P. S. Brodetsky to C.O. Mar 4.
- C.O. S. Brodetsky 75 8/2/47/15 for

H.B. 207/3

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E 1609
22 FEB

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J.7

COPY NO.

27

PALESTINE

The attached record of an interview granted by
the Colonial Secretary to representatives of the
Board of Deputies of British Jews on the
17th February, 1947, is circulated as complementary
to the views expressed by representatives of the
Jewish Agency for Palestine, already circulated in
this series.

Colonial Office, S.W.1.

21ST FEBRUARY, 1947.

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Reference
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PRESENT

COLONIAL OFFICE

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.
Mr. Trafford Smith
Mr. E.N. Fitzgerald

BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS

Professor Selig Brodetsky
Mr. Barnett Janner, M.P.
Mr. A.L. Easterman
Dr. I. Feldman
Mr. B. Lieberman
Mr. A. Brotman

After MR. CREECH JONES had welcomed the delegation, PROFESSOR BRODETSKY said that, although His Majesty's Government's decision to refer the problem of Palestine to the United Nations had already been made known, they would like to offer some comments on the latest British proposals, copies of which had been communicated to them. ~~These would be made on the basis of the minimum requirements which would be demanded by members of the~~ Board.

The plan did not offer a clear or satisfactory solution of the major issues; immigration, the Land Transfers Regulations, and the future of the national home. There was no guarantee that immigration would continue as a right after the admission of 96,000 Jews, nor was there an acknowledgement of the status of the national home which had been the main object of the Mandate and the 1922 White Paper. The plan seemed to them rather a repetition of the 1939 White Paper and would ensure a permanent Arab majority in Palestine. It was not stated, moreover, whether the Land Transfers Regulations would be abrogated. The Regulations were an unfair discrimination against Jews, and unless they were abolished and the Jews consequently permitted to buy land in the Arab areas, the national home would be crystallised and its further expansion made impossible. The Board could not accept any plan that did not satisfy the just demands of Jewry on these three vital points.

Several other questions had also been left uncertain. They did not know the size or location of the Jewish areas; nor whether one Jewish administration or several had been contemplated. They would like further information about the future of the Negev and Jerusalem and were alarmed at the possibility of the closing of the Jewish Agency after the five years transitional period.

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The plan gave no finality and no agreement between the Jews and the Arabs could be expected in five years' time. Although the immediate grant of 96,000 immigration certificates was a strong temptation to accept the plan, they had decided that to do so would be to leave Palestine with a permanent Arab majority and thus endanger the achievements of the past twenty-five years and the whole future of the national home. They considered that the attitude of His Majesty's Government had hardened against Jewish rights, and that the "Bevin" plan was even more unfavourable to Jewry than the "Morrison" plan of last year.

DR. FELDMAN said the plan was unsympathetic to the Jews. Under the Mandate the Jews had a right to demand immigration, and it was not correct to say that the Government was neutral. The Government was in control and could issue certificates if it wished. He thought that the emphasis on self-government at the present time was misplaced. It would in fact mean that the Jewish community would be submerged in the Arab majority and the national home would cease to exist. None the less, the grant of 96,000 certificates made them unwilling to reject the plan out of hand.

MR. EASTERMAN said that the unity of the national home, which had been envisaged in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, would be broken up by the plan. Discrimination against the Jews in the buying of land would be continued, and the Jewish community would be kept in a permanent

MR. JANNER maintained that the plan was not in conformity with the Mandate which had placed no kind of restriction on the national home. On the contrary the plan reflected some of the worst features of the 1939 White Paper. Land Purchase and Immigration were matters that the Jews should decide for themselves, and in these two respects the plan fell far short of Jewish hopes. In the interim period before the meeting of the United Nations it was the duty of His Majesty's Government to carry out the Mandate in full.

MR. CREECH JONES said that when it became apparent in the recent discussions with the Arab delegates and the Jewish Agency Executive that no progress towards an understanding could be made, His Majesty's Government had decided to lay the problem before the United Nations. His Majesty's Government would submit for consideration:-

- (a) The plan of the Arab States.
- (b) The "Morrison" plan.
- (c) The "Bevin" plan, and probably
- (d) The Jewish Agency's plan for a viable Jewish State.

Though discussion of the "Bevin" plan could not now materially affect the future of Palestine, he was grateful for hearing the views of the Board of Deputies which might be a guide in deciding action in the interim period and the policy of His Majesty's Government at the United Nations.

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The rise of Arab Nationalism in Palestine had brought on the demand for an Arab State. The Arabs feared that, if they were not given independence now, a Jewish majority built up by immigration would make them a permanent minority. The Jewish Agency, on the other hand, had been equally insistent on a viable Jewish State now or in the near future. In such circumstances the Mandate was clearly unworkable. The Government of the country had no roots in the people, and met with no co-operation but only hostility from both communities.

The "Bevin" plan had been worked out in the attempt to solve the two problems of Jewish immigration and communal self-government within the framework of a unitary State. It had not aimed at finality but had rather been conceived as a basis for discussion in concrete terms. As regards immigration, it had allowed 4,000 certificates a month for two years which was as large a number as His Majesty's Government alone could handle. It had been impossible to rely on the assistance of the United States Government in this matter. After two years the criterion would be the economic absorptive capacity, which in the event of disagreement with the High Commissioner's decision would be decided by an international arbitration tribunal. In answer to PROFESSOR BRODETSKY'S question whether the Arabs would be allowed to appeal to the tribunal, MR. CREECH JONES said that His Majesty's Government had rather contemplated the possibility of Jewish appeals.

On the second point, self-government, MR. CREECH JONES said that it was essential that some form of autonomy should be introduced in Palestine. His Majesty's Government had safeguards for five years, and His Majesty's Government had proposed to give the maximum powers possible to the local authorities and to set up a representative body for the country as a whole. He had hoped that this might alleviate the fears of each community of domination by the other.

The Jewish area contemplated had not been smaller than that of the "Morrison" plan, and, though all the zones might not be contiguous, the general scheme had been drawn up with allowance for the possibility of partition in five years' time. The regional system would have given an opportunity for Jewish expansion. The Negev could have been the subject of further discussion.

Unfortunately neither side would discuss the plan. The Jewish Agency demanded partition: the Arab delegates resolutely opposed it. Though he himself had been an earlier supporter of partition, he had come to see its insurmountable difficulties. In any case His Majesty's Government could not have imposed it without the sanction of the United Nations. His Majesty's Government had decided therefore to refer the whole problem to the next meeting of the General Assembly.

He was giving active consideration to the details of Government in the interim period when the task of the civil administration was likely to be made more difficult by the resumption of illegal immigration and the outbreak of terrorism. He could only add how very disappointed he had been by the poor results of the Conference and of the talks with the Jewish Agency.

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PROFESSOR BRODETSKY thanked Mr. Creech Jones for his full answer but urged that the refusal of the Jewish Agency to attend the Conference had made no practical difference. MR. CREECH JONES said that attendance would have been a gesture to the friends of Jewry in the United Kingdom.

PROFESSOR BRODETSKY said that he hoped that the Jewish Agency would not be considered unreasonable or intrasigent in their demands; their spokesman had indicated the area of the viable Jewish State that they had in mind. The late war had shown the urgent need for a Jewish State to help and to represent the Jewish people. British Jews regretted the decision to go to the United Nations as they had taken great pride in the British-Jewish partnership in the past and had hoped for satisfactory agreement with His Majesty's Government. The Jews were not afraid of the reference to the United Nations but he asked that the question of their representation there might be given urgent consideration.

He wished to raise a number of points concerning the interim period. First, they were anxious to know how quickly the decision of the United Nations would be implemented. Secondly, they deprecated the recent evacuation of civilians which appeared to be the preparation for military rule to suppress the Jewish community. Thirdly, they hoped that the deportation of refugees to Cyprus would cease forthwith. If His Majesty's Government could grant some concessions in the matters of immigration and land transfer, then the influence terrorism and the Jewish friendship for the United Kingdom would be restored.

- MR. EASTERMAN asked whether His Majesty's Government intended to make recommendations to the United Nations.

MR. CREECH JONES in reply said that there were difficulties in the way of making recommendations. His Majesty's Government would submit the problem and the various proposals already mentioned.

MR. EASTERMAN asked whether His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound by the decision of the United Nations.

MR. CREECH JONES answered that it was impossible to say at present whether His Majesty's Government would accept the decision of the United Nations if that decision involved heavy commitments. Meanwhile, the civil administration of Palestine continued. The Army acted only at the orders of the civil authorities, and there was no intention of proclaiming martial law.

PROFESSOR BRODETSKY thanked Mr. Creech Jones for granting them an interview.

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FO 371 / 61873

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 Further Enclosures to Colonial Office
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 List of 173/47.

1609 928 21

With the compliments of
 — the Under Secretary of State
 for the Colonies.

Colonial Office,
 Downing Street,
 14. 3. 1947.

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Reference

FO 371 / 61873

Woburn House,
Upper Woburn Place,
London, W.C.1.

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.,
Secretary of State for the Colonies,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews expresses its appreciation of the opportunity which you were good enough to afford it to present its views on His Majesty's Government's recent proposals for most Palestine. It was with deep regret that, although anxious to assist His Majesty's Government in reaching a solution of a great human problem, the Board was unable to find that the proposed plan met the minimum requirements of any solution of the Palestine problem which could be considered by Jews as just. It did not seem to affirm the right of Jews to enter Palestine as of right and not on sufferance; it did not remove the discriminatory legislation in regard to settlement of Jews on the land; and it held out no prospect of the realisation of the national aspirations of those Jews whom the Balfour Declaration encouraged to strive for the rebuilding of a re-integrated Jewish civilisation in the ancient land of Israel.

As the whole question of Palestine has now been referred by His Majesty's Government to the United Nations, the Board assumes that no purpose would be served by re-stating, at this juncture, in writing, its detailed comments on His Majesty's Government's proposals. The Board, however, most earnestly desires to address to you an urgent plea that the suspension of discussions on the political future of Palestine, and the probable delay of a solution for a considerable time, should not be allowed to impede the rescue of the unfortunate Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution, the men, women and children in the displaced/

[illegible]

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displaced persons' camps and elsewhere, who desire to reach Palestine.

It is beyond doubt that the situation of these victims of Nazism has been growing desperate after years of persecution and deferred hope, in conditions of unrelieved hardship; neither are proofs lacking of their overwhelming desire to find a home in Palestine, to begin there a new life with the help of relatives and friends eager to assist them in a congenial society most likely to bring about their speedy physical, moral and psychological rehabilitation.

It is the conviction of all observers that nothing would be more calculated to relieve the tension of the Jewish community in Palestine than the admission of these unfortunate people to the Holy Land. Unbearable as is the position of these uprooted and bereaved Jews in Europe, no less unendurable is the consciousness of their plight to their brethren in Palestine. The latter are to help their nearest and dearest when barred from the shores of Palestine. Clearly these conditions of hopelessness and frustration, if continued for years, are bound to have calamitous consequences in both Europe and Palestine.

Moreover, authoritative plans for the solution of the problems of Palestine have contained recommendations for the admission of the displaced Jews to Palestine. In this connection mention should be made of the unanimous recommendation of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry for the admission of 100,000 of these persons.

The Board most earnestly appeals to His Majesty's Government to adopt this recommendation by increasing, in the interim period, the rate of Jewish immigration into Palestine, so as to provide facilities for the speediest possible transfer and settlement there of 100,000 Jews from Europe.

Such an act of humanity and statesmanship would, we feel sure, be welcomed with deep satisfaction by the Jewish people throughout the world.

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It is a source of the deepest distress to us that since we saw you there have been further outrages in Palestine, which we condemn unreservedly in common with all who desire peace and a just settlement of the Palestine problem. We can only hope that His Majesty's Government will not be deterred by the criminal acts of a minority from taking speedy measures to bring relief to the displaced Jews in Europe.

The Board sincerely hopes that the association of Great Britain with the Jewish people in the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home will continue in all circumstances, and the Board of Deputies, as the representative body of the Anglo-Jewish community, will always be anxious to make its contribution to this great problem, and to assist His Majesty's Government, the Jewish Agency and all other bodies concerned in the Jewish question.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) S. BRODETSKY.

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12th March, 1947.

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INDEXED

Thank you for your letter of 4th March. I have read with interest the views which you put forward on the proposals made on behalf of His Majesty's Government on 7th February, and also your suggestions for the interim period pending a decision by the United Nations. I need not assure you that these will be most carefully considered.

(Sgd) A. Creech Jones.

Professor S. Brodetsky.

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PALESTINE

E 1748

27 FEB

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Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E1748/928/31

Droghda Smith

Colonial Office

L. M. Beeley

25 Feb 1947

27 Feb 1947

Palestine Conference, Jewish Representation
 Encloses copies of correspondence with
 Linton on the question of non-Zionist
 representation on the Jewish Agency
 Executive.

Last Paper.

1609

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Minutes.)

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completed.)

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(Index.)

19/8/48

Next Paper.

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Mr. Moshe Kolodny, Jerusalem.

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References

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S.W.1.

24th February, 1947.

Dear Linton,

Thank you for your letter of the 21st of February about the position of the non-Zionist representatives on the Jewish Agency Executive. I am much obliged to you for the information you give.

I should be grateful if you could arrange to let me know ~~in the event~~ ^{in the event} of any changes from the reconsideration of this question referred to in your last paragraph.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Trafford Smith.

J. Linton, Esq.,

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Reference FO 371 / 61873

COPY

Colonial Office,
Downing Street, S.W.1.

12th February, 1947.

Dear Linton,

You may remember that, at the early stages of the talks now going on, I asked you over the telephone to let me know whether your representatives were appearing in their capacity as the Executive elected by the General Council of the Zionist Organisation, or whether they were representing the Executive of the Jewish Agency. You told me that both bodies were now virtually identical in membership, but that the present talks would of course be as originally planned with the Executive of the Jewish Agency.

As a matter of interest, I should like to know how this affects the ~~present~~ ^{present} maintained that there should be non-Zionist members of the Executive of the Jewish Agency. You will no doubt have a copy of the Palestine Survey handy for reference. On pages 909-911 of the second volume, the whole history of the Agency and its enlargement to include non-Zionist representatives is set out, and the concluding position there is that the Agency Executive includes three non-Zionists in addition to all the members of the Zionist Executive.

I should be glad if you could let me know some time fairly soon exactly what the present position is in regard to non-Zionist representation.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Trafford Smith.

J. Linton, Esq.

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COPY

THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE.

77, GREAT RUSSELL STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1.

21st February, 1947.

Trafford Smith, Esq.,
Colonial Office,
Downing Street, S.W.1.

Dear Trafford Smith,

Thank you for your letter of the 12th February. The members of the Executive who participated in the informal talks just concluded represented the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. The position of the non-Zionist representatives on the Jewish Agency Executive is as follows:

The Council of the Jewish Agency at its meeting in 1937 elected five members to represent the non-Zionists on the Executive. They were: Dr. M.B. Hexter, Dr. A. Ruppin, Dr. W. Senator, Mrs. R. Jacobs, and Dr. M.J. Karpf. The first three resided in Jerusalem, and took part in the meetings and in the work of the Agency Executive there - Dr. Ruppin until his death in January 1943, Dr. Senator until his resignation at the end of 1945, (his place is being kept open) and Dr. Hexter until he resumed permanent residence in the United States.

The Va'ad Leumi (Jewish National Council) which was one of the constituent bodies on the non-Zionist side of the Jewish Agency, is closely associated with the Executive through the attendance of two of its representatives at meetings of the Executive of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem.

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During the war no new elections could be held, as the Council of the Jewish Agency could not meet; the Zionist Congress was in the same position. Though it proved possible to convene a meeting of the Zionist Congress last December, there were many difficulties connected with any similar step as regards the Agency Council. Some of the Jewish communities which were represented in the Council of the Jewish Agency are no longer in a position to be represented at all (e.g. Latvia and Lithuania - now included in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics); others have been totally or partially destroyed (e.g. Germany, Austria, Poland, Yugoslavia); others again are only now beginning to rebuild their lives and re-establish their communal institutions. Several members of the Council died during the war, and in the United States, where the members of the non-Zionist section of the Agency Council were mostly selected ad personam, several leading of the formation of the Jewish Agency are no longer alive.

The Executive are considering the whole question of reconstituting the non-Zionist representation on the Jewish Agency. They are already in touch with the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Agudas Israel, and other organisations on the subject. It is contemplated to call a meeting of the Council of the Jewish Agency as soon as an outline scheme for relating the organisation of the non-Zionist section of the Agency with the post-war situation has been worked out as a result of these discussions, but you will appreciate that there are still difficulties to be overcome and problems to be solved before that can happen.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) J. Linton.

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E 1748

27 FEB

Downing Street,

S.W.1.

25th February, 1947.

Dear Beeley,

You may like to have the enclosed copies of correspondence with Linton on the question of non-Zionist representation on the Jewish Agency Executive.

As you will see, I have asked Linton to let me know what is ultimately decided, and I will, of course, send on the copies of any further letter he may

Yours sincerely,

Trifford Smith

H. Beeley, Esq., C.B.E.

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1947

PALESTINE

4 MAR

Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E1887/928/31

40 minute

W. Beley.

19 Feb 1947

4 March 1947

Palestine Conference Jewish
Secretary of State interview with representatives
of AGUDAS ISRAEL, on Feb 20. Gives
particulars of organization and its representatives
for interview, and list of points they wish
to raise with the Govt.

Last Paper.

1748

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action
completed.)

GEM 4/3

(Index.)

19/8/48

Next Paper.

1966

(Minutes.)

The interview took place on February
28th. Record within.

H.B. 4/3

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FO 371/61873

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Friday, Feb. 28th 1947
3.15 p.m.

S. of S.

Private Secretary. 19/2

Secretary of State's Interview with
Representatives of Agudas Israel.

(5.30 p.m. on Thursday, February 20)

Agudas Israel is an organisation of orthodox Jews. They support Jewish development in Palestine and large scale immigration, but not the Zionist demand for a Jewish State.

Their delegation will consist of the following:-

1. Rabbi J.J. Horowitz
(Chairman of the London Executive)
2. Rabbi Dr. Lewin
(from New York)
3. Rabbi A. Babad.
4. Mr. P.A. Goodman
(Chairman of Political Commission)

They wish to speak to the Secretary of State on three points:-

- (1) Jewish immigration in the immediate future, pending a decision by the United Nations. They will probably propose a rate of 4,000 monthly.
- (2) The composition of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. They will complain that the Agency does not, as was originally intended, represent non-Zionist as well as Zionist opinion.
- (3) They will also express the belief that H.M.G. should not go to the United Nations without recommendations and will suggest further negotiation with a view to the presentation by H.M.G. to the United Nations of proposals in which some Jewish opinion at least could acquiesce. They would be prepared to accept our latest proposals as a basis for discussion.

I warned Mr. Goodman that the Secretary of State might not be able to give them more than half an hour. He promised to prepare a short statement incorporating all the three points mentioned above. The delegation will no doubt wish to begin by reading this statement.

H. B. Bealey

19th February, 1947.

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Palestine file.

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PALESTINE

Record of an interview given by the Secretary
of State to a Delegation of the Agudath Israel
World Organisation

The Secretary of State received, in the House of Commons on February 28th, a delegation of the Agudath Israel World Organisation. Its members were: Rabbi Horowitz, Rabbi Babad, Mr. H.A. Goodman and Mr. Strouss.

Rabbi Horowitz explained that the deputation represented Orthodox Jews throughout the world. He emphasized the friendship of Orthodox Jewry for Great Britain, and regretted that the situation in Palestine had brought about friction between the Jews and Britain. He compared himself with Moses on the threshold of the Promised Land, asking for a sign that would bring conviction to his followers.

Mr. Goodman reminded the Secretary of State that Agudath Israel had been invited to participate in the London Conference on Palestine. They had done their best to persuade other Jewish organisations to take part, but unfortunately they had failed. They had since been received by the Colonial Secretary, and had explained their point of view to him. They would have been prepared to accept the latest British proposals as a basis for negotiation. These proposals appealed to them because they included provision for the early entry into Palestine of 96,000 Jewish immigrants. They had been instructed to persuade the Jewish Agency not to reject the plan out of hand.

The question now was what was to be done during the interval pending the reference of the Palestine problem to the United Nations. They had two proposals to make:

- (i) that His Majesty's Government should not go to the United Nations without a recommendation. Mr. Goodman suggested that further discussions, after the Secretary of States' return from Moscow, might result in the formulation of a policy which some Jewish opinion at least could support;

and

- (ii) that the immigration quota during the next six months should be raised to 4,000 a month. During this period the immigrants should be properly selected, and those Jews who attempted to enter Palestine illegally should be put at the back of the queue and not at the front as they now were. His Majesty's Government should make a declaration to the effect that no Jew attempting to enter Palestine illegally would in any circumstances be admitted into the country during the next two years.

Mr. Goodman/

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Mr. Goodman also spoke of the present composition of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. He pointed out that the Agency was required, by Article 4 of the Mandate, to secure the co-operation of non-Zionist Jews. The constitution of the Jewish Agency, as adopted in 1929, accordingly provided that 50% of the Executive should consist of non-Zionists. This provision was no longer observed, and the Executive was now exclusively Zionist in composition. Mr. Goodman thought that, if the Jewish Agency had been constituted as was originally intended, it could not have turned down the Government's invitation to the London Conference.

Rabbi Horowitz, supporting Mr. Goodman's suggestions, drew special attention to the good effect which the admission of a larger number of Rabbis and theological students might have on the attitude of the Jewish community in Palestine.

The Secretary of State said that he had been greatly worried by the danger that the present activity of Zionists might create anti-Semitism feeling in this country. He asked the deputation to wait while he went into the House in order to announce the conclusion of the treaty with France.

On his return from the House, the Secretary of State was accompanied by the Colonial Secretary.

The Secretary of State then explained the difficulty which the Jewish Agency. The Arabs were ready to grant extensive rights to the Jewish community in Palestine. He thought there would be no insuperable difficulty in persuading the Arabs to accept an amendment of their proposals providing for further Jewish immigration. But they would only accept this if they knew what was the purpose of such immigration. If they thought that its aim was the establishment of a Jewish majority and the conversion of Palestine into a Jewish State, they would refuse to contemplate it. But if it was presented as a humanitarian measure to deal with the immediate situation in Europe, they would accept it.

He thought that the United Nations would probably vote in favour of the establishment of a democratic state in Palestine, i.e. a unitary state with an Arab majority. It was most unlikely that the United Nations would endorse the connection of the Jewish religion with a temporal state. Given the assurance of a democratically organised state afterwards, there would be no difficulty in ensuring the entry of 100,000 Jews in the near future.

Such a solution would be satisfactory from the British point of view also. His Majesty's Government could not contemplate the repetition of the present struggle over the question of immigration at the end of whatever interim period was proposed. They would prefer to surrender the Mandate.

He would be willing to consult the Arab States on these lines. Immigration during the interim period might be at the rate of 4,000 a month. But he could not begin to negotiate on this basis until the Jewish Agency had first shown its determination to put an end to terrorism and illegal immigration. The Secretary of State added that, in his view, there would have been no terrorism in Palestine if Ben Gurion and Shertok had not started it. They were weak men.

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Unless this condition was satisfied, there was nothing he could do. Why should Britain expose herself to further hostility from the Arabs for the sake of a people who were at war against her. The Arab States would say that we were yielding to force. But the cessation of illegal immigration and of terrorism would change our attitude to the problems of the interim period.

Rabbi Horowitz said that we seemed to be moving round in a vicious circle. He deplored terrorism in Palestine, but he thought the only way to stop it was to take the wind out of the terrorists' sails by allowing increase of immigration.

The Secretary of State replied that every concession made by His Majesty's Government was interpreted as a sign of weakness. In fact we could put an end to terrorism tomorrow. But we did not want to take ruthless action.

Mr. Goodman asked whether he could see the other Jewish organisations, including the Jewish Agency, and say that if illegal immigration were stopped His Majesty's Government would, in his opinion, grant a monthly quota of approximately 4,000.

The Secretary of State said that he could not allow Mr. Goodman to convey so definite an undertaking. If there were an announcement that illegal immigration would be stopped, then His Majesty's Government would make the fullest use of that new development in negotiating with the Arabs.

The Secretary of State agreed that a new machinery was needed for the selection of immigrants into Palestine.

H.B. Bailey

3rd March, 1947.

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Registry
Number

E1970/928/31

FROM

E.R. Edmonds

No.

Technical Office

Dated

28.1.1967

Received
in Registry

28.1.1967

6 MAR 1967

H.M. Patent Infringement

Entered copy of letter from the
H.M. Patent Infringement and the Anglo-
Danish Association on H.M. Patent
Infringement and their decision to
refer the problem to the United Nations.

Last Paper.

1966

(Minutes.)

References.

In P.P. B.O. letter 75872/147/15 gen
to Leonard Allen 12/2

7.B. 6/3

(Print.)

7.B. 20/3

(How disposed of.)

(Action
completed.)

J.E. 1/3

(Index.)

1/3/48

Next Paper.

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Reference

FO 371 / 61873

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5/5-8 MAR

28th February, 1947.

I enclose for Mr. Bevin's information copies of letters received by Mr. Creech Jones from the Agudas Israel World Organisation and the Anglo-Jewish Association on His Majesty's Government's latest Palestine proposals and their decision to refer the problem to the United Nations.

Acknowledgments have been sent to both.

sought our concurrence in the release of their letter to the press. We have agreed.

Yours sincerely

W. J. Lamont

Private Secretary.

J.P.E.C. Henniker, Esq., M.C.

A diagram showing a 6x2 grid. The top row contains numbers 1 through 6. Below the grid is a ruler with markings from 0 to 10. The number 1 is placed above the first column, and the number 2 is placed above the second column.

Reference

FO 371 61873

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AGUDAS ISRAEL WORLD ORGANISATION.

Executive Office,
114 Southampton Row,
London, W.C.1.

Ref: WO/G.

February 20th 1947.

The Rt. Hon. Arthur Creech Jones, M.P.,
Colonial Office, S.W.1.

Dear Mr. Creech Jones,

We desire to express our appreciation for the opportunity afforded to a delegation of this Organisation to present its views to you when we were received at the Colonial Office on the 10th inst.

We are also grateful to you for causing a copy of the Palestine Plan to be sent to this Organisation, in order to enable our Executive the opportunity of studying the same.

The Plan itself contains a number of proposals which would have required considerable clarification. We understood from you that these proposals were in the form of a basis for discussion, and that H.M.G. would have been prepared to consider any amendments or alterations which the Jewish representatives would have been prepared to submit.

In its present form, therefore, the plan could neither be accepted nor rejected. It was our view that the discussions should be continued, particularly with a view to an early resumption of large-scale immigration.

Since we were privileged to meet you, His Majesty's Government have stated their decision to refer the whole problem to the United Nations, and detailed comment therefore, on the present proposals are presumably not required in the changed conditions.

As you may be aware it has always been the earnest desire of this Organisation to participate in any discussions concerning the future of Palestine, with a view to achieving the amicable settlement for the peace of the Holy Land which we all desire. For that reason we accepted the invitation which H.M.G. extended to us to participate in the Lancaster House Conference, and subsequently did our utmost similarly to influence the other organisations then invited.

We deeply regret the breakdown in the discussions. But we sincerely hope that H.M.G. will in due course advance proposals on this subject for submission to the United Nations, and that prior thereto an opportunity will be afforded to Agudas Israel World Organisation, with the other bodies with whom H.M.G. has had discussions, to present our views on this matter of such vital concern to Jewry everywhere.

In the meantime we most earnestly desire to call attention to the dire need of Jewish displaced persons on the European continent. The reference of the Palestine problem to the United Nations will involve considerable delay before any decision is attained. We desire, therefore, to stress the vital importance for a relaxation of the existing restrictions on immigration; we ventured to draw your attention to this matter when we called to see you, and understood that this problem would be considered on the termination of the Conference.

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We make this plea primarily on humanitarian grounds, but we are convinced also that the generosity of H.M.G. would in a considerable measure relieve the tenseness of the Jewish situation in Palestine, and also bring about a detente in Jewish communities of America and this country.

The proposals mentioned by the Foreign Secretary of an immigration of 1500 monthly would not appear to be adequate for the dire needs. We beg to refer to the fact that the proposals of Mr. Morrison envisaged an immigration of 100,000 in one year, whilst the recent Palestine Plan deals with 4000 certificates for 24 months. It would therefore appear to be compatible with British policy that the immigration figure should be not less than 4000 monthly.

We desire, Sir, to thank you for your kindness in receiving our delegation. I am desired to assure you that this Organisation, the representative body of orthodox Jews throughout the world, is at the disposal of H.M.G. if at any time, or in any way, we can be of service in assisting to achieve peace in Palestine, and the restoration of friendship which Jews throughout the dispersion have ever cherished for Britain and its cause.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) H.A. Goodman.

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ANGLO-JEWISH ASSOCIATION.

Woburn House (Fifth Floor),
Upper Woburn Place,
London, W.C.1.

February 21, 1947.

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.,
Colonial Office,
London, S.W.1.

Dear Mr. Creech Jones,

You were good enough to cause a copy of the Palestine Plan recently put before the Jewish Agency to be sent to the Anglo-Jewish Association in order that the representatives of the Association might have an opportunity of studying it before their meeting with you on February 14th.

Since that meeting took place, His Majesty's Government have announced their decision to refer the Palestine question to the United Nations. It appears from Mr. Bevin's statement in Parliament on February 18th that it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to recommend any solution. If we may be permitted to say so, the Anglo-Jewish Association regrets this decision, and regrets it all the more before the Association, like other bodies of British Jews, has been accustomed to address to the British Government any representations which it might desire to make on such matters but in this case will, apparently, be unable by these means to obtain a hearing for its views. It may be that the altered circumstances have made it purposeless to offer any observations on the Plan, but we think it right, nevertheless, to submit our comments.

In two important respects the Plan is attractive. It would provide homes in Palestine for a substantial proportion of the Jewish refugees and displaced persons in Europe, and it holds out both to the Arabs and the Jews the prospect of an advance in the direction of self-government.

On the other hand, it appears from Paragraph 10 of the Plan that the proposed admission of 96,000 Jews at the rate of 4,000 monthly would not begin until after the conclusion of a Trusteeship Agreement, which might prove to be a lengthy process. Though Paragraph 5 suggests that an earlier start might be made, given "substantial acquiescence from both communities in Palestine", the proceedings of the recent Palestine Conference suggest, unhappily, that there is no real prospect of this condition being satisfied on the Arab side, so that for the refugees and displaced persons the Plan offers little hope of early relief.

There is no clear indication of the principles on which further immigration would be regulated, after the admission of the 96,000 during the three years' period mentioned in Paragraph 10 of the Plan. The question left unanswered is whether, subject to economic absorptive capacity, Jewish immigration is to be facilitated, or whether the matter is to be left at large, the sign-post provided by Article 6 of the Palestine Mandate being removed.

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As regards the continuance of immigration after the end of the proposed five years' Trusteeship, the provisions of Paragraphs 16 and 17 of the Plan would, in practice, almost certainly result in this and other questions relating to the future of Palestine being referred to the Trusteeship Council. For that reason, and also for the reason mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the question arises whether it may be assumed that the Trusteeship Agreement, which the Trusteeship Council would have before it in coming to its decision, would, like the existing Mandate, affirm as a matter of international concern the principle that the establishment of the Jewish National Home is to be facilitated.

With regard to Local Government (Paragraph 7 of the Plan), we understand that, although it does not necessarily follow from the proposals that all the Arab or all the Jewish territory must be contiguous, it is, in fact, contemplated that the Jewish territory (for example), would not consist merely of a number of small detached areas but would, as to the bulk of it, form a continuous bloc. We raise this point because it is clearly relevant to the extent of the powers which it would be administratively practicable to devolve upon the proposed new Authorities.

The composition and area of the Jewish and Arab territories respectively are not specified in the Plan. These would, of course, be highly material in forming an opinion on its merits.

As to Land Transfers, Paragraph 11 of the Plan would seem to suggest that an Arab Local Authority would have power if it so desired, to continue the existing discrimination against Jews in the matter of transactions in land. It is not clear to us whether, in an Arab area in which there was a Jewish minority, this would be considered to be consistent with the safeguards for minorities mentioned in Paragraph 7 of the Plan.

As regards the Central Government (Paragraph 12 of the Plan), a question arises as to the extent to which it is intended that the Advisory Council shall consist of representatives of the Arabs and Jews respectively, as distinct from nominees of the High Commissioner. There is, further, no indication in the Plan of the principles on which the seats to be allotted to Arabs and Jews would be divided between them.

Though open, as we think to the foregoing (among other) criticisms, we recognise that the Plan contains some attractive features. We believe, however, that it would have a much better prospect of achieving its purpose if it pointed more clearly in the direction of some form of partition. On this subject we hope that the Anglo-Jewish Association may be permitted to address a further communication to you in due course.

We cannot conclude without calling attention to the desperate plight of the Jewish refugees and displaced persons in Europe. Even on the most sanguine view, the reference of the Palestine question to the United Nations must involve some considerable delay before a decision is reached. We desire most earnestly to represent that the relaxation of the existing restrictions on immigration should not be required to await that decision, and that, as a first step, a substantial monthly quota should now be granted for an interim period of (say) six months.

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We make this plea primarily on humanitarian grounds, but also because we believe that such an act of humanity would have a steadying effect upon the situation in Palestine. That new homes should be found for the refugees and displaced persons has, by common consent, now become a matter of the utmost urgency. There may be room for differences of opinion as to how and where those homes should be provided, but, in our submission, it cannot be right that nearly two years after the end of the War in Europe Palestine should have made no substantial contribution at all.

We desire to thank you for your courtesy in receiving us and to assure you that the Anglo-Jewish Association will be at your disposal, if at any stage or in any manner it can be of service in connection with Palestine.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Leonard Stein.

(sgd) Neville Laski.

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12 th March, 1947.

Thank you for the letter from Mr. Laski and yourself of 21st February. I have noted with interest your comments (on behalf of the Anglo-Jewish Association) on the proposals put forward for discussion by His Majesty's Government on 7th February, and your suggestions for the interim period pending a decision by the United Nations.

You will not expect me to reply in detail at this stage, but I wish to assure you that very careful consideration will be given to your representations.

(Sgd) A. Creech Jones.

Leonard Stein, Esq.

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ANGLO-JAPANESE ASSOCIATION.

Woburn House
Upper Woburn Place,
London, W.C.1.

February 21, 1947.

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P.,
Colonial Office,
London, S.W.1.

Dear Mr. Creech Jones,

You were good enough to cause a copy of the Palestine Plan recently put before the Jewish Agency to be sent to the Anglo-Jewish Association in order that the representatives of the Association might have an opportunity of studying it before their meeting with you on February 14th.

Since that meeting took place, His Majesty's Government have announced their decision to refer the Palestine question to the United Nations. It appears from Mr. Bevin's statement in Parliament on February 18th that it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to recommend any solution. If we may be permitted to say so, the Anglo-Jewish Association regrets this decision, and regrets it all the more because the Association, like other bodies, ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~been~~ ^{been} ~~unable~~ ^{has} ~~to~~ ^{been} ~~make~~ ^{been} ~~any~~ ^{been} ~~representations~~ ^{been} ~~which~~ ^{been} ~~it~~ ^{been} ~~might~~ ^{been} ~~have~~ ^{been} ~~desired~~ ^{been} ~~to~~ ^{been} ~~make~~ ^{been} ~~on~~ ^{been} ~~such~~ ^{been} ~~matters~~ ^{been} ~~but~~ ^{been} ~~in~~ ^{been} ~~this~~ ^{been} ~~case~~ ^{been} ~~will,~~ ^{been} ~~apparently,~~ ^{been} ~~be~~ ^{been} ~~unable~~ ^{been} ~~by~~ ^{been} ~~these~~ ^{been} ~~means~~ ^{been} ~~to~~ ^{been} ~~obtain~~ ^{been} ~~a~~ ^{been} ~~hearing~~ ^{been} ~~for~~ ^{been} ~~its~~ ^{been} ~~views.~~ ^{been} It may be that the altered circumstances have made it purposeless to offer any observations on the Plan, but we think it right, nevertheless, to submit our comments.

In two important respects the Plan is attractive. It would provide homes in Palestine for a substantial proportion of the Jewish refugees and displaced persons in Europe, and it holds out both to the Arabs and the Jews the prospect of an advance in the direction of self-government.

On the other hand, it appears from paragraph 10 of the Plan that the proposed admission of 96,000 Jews at the rate of 4,000 monthly would not begin until after the conclusion of a Trusteeship Agreement, which might prove to be a lengthy process. Though paragraph 5 suggests that an earlier start might be made, given "substantial acquiescence from both communities in Palestine", the proceedings of the recent Palestine Conference suggest, unhappily, that there is no real prospect of this condition being satisfied on the Arab side, that for the refugees and displaced persons the Plan offers little hope of early relief.

There is no clear indication of the principles on which further immigration would be regulated, after the admission of the 96,000, during the three years' period mentioned in paragraph 10 of the Plan. The question left unanswered is whether, subject to economic absorptive capacity, Jewish immigration is to be facilitated, or whether the matter is to be left at large, the sign-post provided by Article 6 of the Palestine Mandate being removed.

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As regards the continuance of immigration after the end of the proposed five years' Trusteeship, the provisions of paragraphs 16 and 17 of the Plan would, in practice, almost certainly result in this and other questions relating to the future of Palestine being referred to the Trusteeship Council. For that reason, and also for the reason mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the question arises whether it may be assumed that the Trusteeship Agreement, which the Trusteeship Council would have before it in coming to its decision, would, like the existing Mandate, affirm as a matter of international concern the principle that the establishment of the Jewish National Home is to be facilitated.

With regard to Local Government (Paragraph 7 of the Plan), we understand that, although it does not necessarily follow from the proposals that all the Arab or all the Jewish territory must be contiguous, it is, in fact, contemplated that the Jewish territory (for example), would not consist merely of a number of small detached areas but would, as to the bulk of it, form a continuous bloc. We raise this point because it is clearly relevant to the extent of the powers which it would be administratively practicable to devolve upon the proposed new Authorities.

The composition and area of the Jewish and Arab territories respectively are not specified in the Plan. These would, of course, be highly material in forming an opinion on its merits.

AS TO LAND TRANSFERS, paragraph 11 of the Plan would seem to suggest that an Arab Local authority would have power, if it so desired, to continue the existing discrimination against Jews in the matter of transactions in land. It is not clear to us whether, in an Arab area in which there was a Jewish minority, this would be considered to be consistent with the safeguards for minorities mentioned in Paragraph 7 of the Plan.

As regards the Central Government (Paragraph 13 of the Plan), a question arises as to the extent to which it is intended that the Advisory Council shall consist of representatives of the Arabs and Jews respectively, as distinct from nominees of the High Commissioner. There is, further, no indication in the Plan of the principles on which the seats to be allotted to Arabs and Jews would be divided between them.

Though open, as we think, to the foregoing (among other) criticisms, we recognise that the Plan contains some attractive features. We believe, however, that it would have a much better prospect of achieving its purpose if it pointed more clearly in the direction of some form of partition. On this subject we hope that the Anglo-Jewish Association may be permitted to address a further communication to you in due course.

We cannot conclude without calling attention to the desperate plight of the Jewish refugees and displaced persons in Europe. Even on the most sanguine view, the reference of the Palestine question to the United Nations must involve some considerable delay before a decision is reached. We desire most earnestly to represent that the relaxation of the existing restrictions on immigration should not be required to await that decision, and that, as a first step, a substantial monthly quota should now be granted for an interim period of (say) six months.

We make this plea primarily on humanitarian grounds, but also because we believe that such an act of humanity would have

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a steady effect upon the situation in Palestine. That new homes should be found for the refugees and displaced persons has, by common consent, now become a matter of the utmost urgency. There may be room for differences of opinion as to how and where these homes should be provided, but, in our submission, it cannot be right that nearly two years after the end of the war in Europe Palestine should have made no substantial contribution at all.

We desire to thank you for your courtesy in receiving us and to assure you that the Anglo-Jewish Association will be at your disposal, if at any stage or in any manner it can be of service in connection with Palestine.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) Neville Laski.

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Edmonds
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FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

3rd March, 1947.

Dear Edmonds,

Thank you for your
letter of the 28th February
about the letters to the
Colonial Secretary from
Agudas Israel and the Anglo-
Jewish Association.

The Foreign Secretary
agrees to the Anglo-Jewish
Association releasing their
letter to the press.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd) J. Henniker

E.R. Edmonds, Esq.,
Colonial Office.

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